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'CHRISTOPHER NORTH'

A MEMOIR OF JOHN WILSON

LATE PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

COMPILED

FROM FAMILY PAPERS AND OTHER SOURCES

BY HIS DAUGHTER

MRS. GORDON.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIR OF JOHN WILSON.

MEMOIR OF JOHN WILSON.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROFESSOR AND HIS CLASS.

It was no temporary enthusiasm that glorified the name of "the Professor" among his students, and still keeps his memory green in hearts that have long ago outlived the romantic ideals of youth. One of the most pleasing results of my labour has been to come upon traces everywhere of the love and admiration with which my father is remembered by those who attended his class. That remembrance is associated in some instances with sentiments of the most unbounded gratitude for help and counsel given in the most critical times of a young man's life. How much service of this sort was rendered during an academical connexion of thirty years may be estimated as something more to be thought of than the proudest literary fame. So, I doubt not, my father felt, though on that subject, or on any claims he had earned for individual gratitude, he was never heard to speak. Of his merits as a teacher of

moral philosophy I am not speaking, and cannot pretend to give any critical estimate. I leave that to more competent hands. What I speak of is his relation to his students beyond the formal business of the class; for it is that, I think, that constitutes, as much as the quality of the lectures delivered, the difference between one teacher and another. Here was a poet, an orator, a philosopher, fitted in any one of these characters to excite the interest and respect of youthful hearers. But it was not these qualities alone or chiefly that called forth the affectionate homage of so many hearts: what knit them to the Professor was the heart they found in him, the large and generous soul of a man that could be resorted to and relied on, as well as respected and admired. No man ever had a deeper and kindlier sympathy with the feelings of youth; none could be prompter and sincerer to give advice and assistance when required. Himself endowed with that best gift, a heart that never grew old, he could still, when things were no longer with him "as they had been of yore," enter into the thoughts and aspirations of those starting fresh in life, and give them encouragement, and exchange ideas with them, in no strained or formal fashion. No wonder that such a man was popular, that his name is still dear, and awakens a thrill of filial affection and pride in the hearts of men who once knew him as their preceptor and friend.

I should have liked much had I been able to give some account of the Professor's lectures,[1] and his ap-

[1] The following is the Syllabus of his course, drawn up by the Professor for the *Edinburgh University Almanac*, as delivered in the session

pearance in his class. But I am saved the risk of attempting to describe what I have not seen, and cannot be expected to be skilled in, by the sketches with which I have been favoured from men well able to do justice

1833-4, apparently the same in arrangement as originally determined on in his consultations with his friend Blair. In what year he remodelled his course, having previously remodelled his views on the great question of the nature of the Moral Faculty, I have not ascertained. It was at least subsequent to the year 1837, to which Mr. Smith's sketch refers. In later years he began in his first lecture with the subject of the Moral Faculty, the discussion of which extended, Mr. Nicolson informs me, over thirty-seven lectures, occupying the time from the commencement of the session in November to the Christmas recess:—

"MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

"*This Class meets at Twelve o'clock.*

"MORAL PHILOSOPHY attempts to ascertain, as far as human reason can do so, the law which must regulate the conduct of Man as a moral being. Inasmuch as it does not derive this law from any authority, but endeavours to deduce it from principles founded in the nature of things, it takes the name of a science. It may be called the Science of Duty.

"The first object, therefore, will be to find those principles on which this law of duty must be grounded. For this purpose we have to consider —1st, The nature of the human being who is the subject of such a law; and 2d, The relations in which he is placed; his nature and his relations concurring to determine the character of his moral obligations.

"When the nature of man has been considered, and also the various relations of which he is capable, we shall have fully before us the ground of all his moral obligations; and it will remain to show what they are, to deduce the law which the principles we shall have obtained will assign. But when we shall have gone over the examination of his nature, the mere statement of his relations will so unavoidably include the idea of the duties that spring from them, that it would be doing a sort of violence to the understanding to separate them; and therefore the consideration of his Duties will be included in the Second Division of the Course.

"But the performance of duty does not necessarily take place upon its being known. There are difficulties and impediments which arise in the weaknesses, the passions, the whole character of him who is to perform it. Hence there arises a separate inquiry into the means to which man is to resort, to enable him to discharge his known obligations. There must be

to the subject, so far as any sketch can be supposed to do justice to an eloquence that required to be heard in order to be appreciated. Of these various reminiscences I shall give three, in the order of the dates to which

a resolved and deliberate subjection of himself to the known Moral Law; and an inquiry, therefore, into the necessity, nature, and means of Moral Self-government, will furnish the *Third* and last Division of the Course.

"In the *First* Division of the Course, then, we consider the constitution of the Human Being. He has a PHYSICAL NATURE, the most perfect of any that is given to the kinds of living creatures, of which he is one, infinitely removed as he is from all the rest. He has an INTELLIGENCE by which he is connected with higher orders of beings; he has a MORAL NATURE by which he communicates with God; he has a SPIRITUAL ESSENCE by which he is immortal.

"All these natures and powers, wonderful in themselves, are mysteriously combined. The highest created substance Spirit, and Matter the lowest, are joined and even blended together in perfect and beautiful UNION.

"We begin by treating generally of his PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION and POWERS, and showing that much of his happiness—it may be of his virtue—is intimately connected with their healthful condition, as there is a mutual reaction between them and his highest faculties. The APPETITES are explained, and the phenomena of the SENSES; and pains taken to put in a clear light the nature of SIMPLE SENSATION, before proceeding to illustrate the THEORY OF PERCEPTION.

"The impressions received through the senses would be of no use; they could not become materials of Thought, if the mind were not endowed with a power of reproducing them to itself in its internal activity; and this power we consider under the name of CONCEPTION, and very fully the laws by which its action is regulated, the LAWS OF ASSOCIATION.

"We are then led to inquire what is the FACULTY OF THOUGHT itself; and if the different operations of JUDGMENT, ABSTRACTION, and REASONING may all be explained as Acts of this one FACULTY OF INTELLECTION.

"IMAGINATION itself seems to admit of being resolved into the union of this Faculty, with certain Feelings, under the Law of Association; and here an inquiry is instituted into the sources of the SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL, an attempt made to define GENIUS and its province, and illustrations are given of the PHILOSOPHY OF TASTE.

"Looking on Man's MORAL NATURE, we seem to see one Principle presiding over and determining the character of all the rest; distinguished by different names, but which no other, perhaps, so well describes as that

they respectively relate, viz., 1830, 1837, and 1850, interposing first two characteristic records of earlier relations between the Professor and his students.

About a year after he had entered upon his new

which expresses it to the common understandings of men—CONSCIENCE. Is it SIMPLE or COMPOSITE? NATURAL or ACQUIRED? In endeavouring to answer these questions, we must take a review of all the most celebrated Moral Systems in which it has been attempted to explain its origin, its composition, its growth, and its power.

"From the consideration of this MORAL PRINCIPLE, to which our whole mind is subjected, we pass on to those various POWERS OF PASSION AND AFFECTION which are placed under its jurisdiction, and which, in their endless complexity and infinitely diversified modifications, constitute the strength of the human mind for action, and are the sources of the happiness, the sorrows, and the unfortunate errors of human life. These numerous principles, which have been classed in different manners by Ethical writers, but of which no classification is adequate to represent the variety, are very fully treated of under such great and simple divisions as serve to mark them out for separate discussion; an arrangement and order, which, whether metaphysically just or not, appear to afford facilities for analysing the processes of nature.

"In treating of Man as a SPIRITUAL BEING, we consider the doctrines of the IMMATERIALITY AND IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL—doctrines so important and interesting that no argument can be lost that serves to impress them more deeply, and so elevated, that merely to contemplate them, does of itself tend to spiritualize the affection and imagination.

"The *Second* Division of the Course comprehends an inquiry into Man's RELATIONS AND DUTIES. His first RELATION is as a creature to the MAKER AND GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD, and therefore it becomes necessary to consider, in the first place, what we are able to know of the Attributes of that Great Being to whom he owes his FIRST DUTY,—a duty which is the foundation of all others.

"The utmost powers of the human mind have always been directed upon this great object. Its Intelligence desires to know the Origin of all things. Its Moral Understanding impels it to seek the Author of all order and law. Its Love and Happiness carry it towards the Giver of all good.

"The chief doctrines which are held concerning the Being and Attributes of Deity, men have conceived might be established by two methods; the first is that which deduces them from the absolute necessity of things, prior to all consideration of the effects in which they are mani-

duties, the Professor was rambling during vacation-time in the south of Scotland, having for a while exchanged the gown for the old "Sporting Jacket." On his return to Edinburgh, he was obliged to pass through Hawick,

fested,—the ARGUMENT or DEMONSTRATION *à priori*. The other method is that to which nature continually constrains us, which may be going on in our minds at every moment, an evidence and conviction collecting upon us throughout life. It deduces the Existence and Attributes of God from their effects in his works, which our Reason can ascribe to no other origin. It reasons from effects to the cause, and is therefore termed the ARGUMENT *à posteriori*.

"The great points established by both these modes of argument are, in the first place, the Existence of God, his Power, and his Wisdom. These may be called the Attributes which our Intelligence compels us to understand, and for which that faculty is sufficient. But there are other perfections which as nearly concern us, and to the contemplation of which we are called by other faculties of our being—His Love, Justice, and Righteousness.

"And here it appears necessary to vindicate the argument of the Evidence of Design from the misrepresentations and sophistries of certain writers by whom it has been impugned, and to expose the unphilosophical and impious spirit of their scepticism.

"When we have considered the grounds on which our natural reason is convinced of these attributes, the *relations* of Man to God are manifest, and his *Duties* rise up in all their awful magnitude to our minds.

"From this part of the Second Division of our Course, which belongs to Natural Theology, we go on to consider the RELATIONS AND DUTIES OF MAN TO HIS FELLOW-CREATURES.

"The division of these relations, with their duties, is determined upon two grounds, being opposed to each other, in one respect, as they are PUBLIC or PRIVATE, and, in another, as they are simply NATURAL, or of HUMAN ADOPTION AND INSTITUTION.

"By the private relations, we understand those by which a man is united to the members of his own family, household, and kindred, as a son, a father, a brother, a kinsman, a master, a servant, a friend. Under each of these relations, the particular circumstances attending it, which constitute the grounds of obligation, are considered, and the duties arising from them explicitly and fully stated, under the head of HOUSEHOLD LAWS.

"By the PUBLIC RELATIONS, we are led to consider him as a Member of a Political Body. There is here a twofold relation—that of RULERS AND SUBJECTS. We shall have to treat of the DUTIES belonging to both;

where, on his arrival, finding it to be fair-day, he readily availed himself of the opportunity to witness the amusements going on. These happened to include a "little mill" between two members of the local "fancy." His interest in pugilism attracted him to the spot, where he soon discovered something very wrong, and a degree of injustice being perpetrated which he could not stand. It was the work of a moment to espouse the weaker side, a proceeding which naturally drew down upon him the hostility of the opposite party. This result was to him, however, of

as of Rulers, their first and especial duty to maintain the INDEPENDENCE of the Community among other States, and GOOD GOVERNMENT within their own; as of subjects, the duties of ALLEGIANCE and OBEDIENCE; and here will have to be stated the grounds of obligation on rulers and subjects, namely, MUTUAL BENEFITS; and their duty to their Common Country.

"In the course of these inquiries, questions of vast importance arise as to the ORIGIN AND GROUNDS OF GOVERNMENT; the PRINCIPLES OF LEGISLATION; the PRINCIPAL FORMS which POLITICAL GOVERNMENT has assumed among different nations; and their various adaptation to the essential ends for which they were constituted.

"In this Division of the Course, all those various Theories are strictly examined, which have been offered at different times, of the Nature of Virtue, and the Grounds of Moral Obligation—from Plato and Aristotle, to Stewart and Brown; and especial attention is paid to the Moral Philosophy of Greece.

"In the *Third* Division of the Course, which runs into the Second, it is attempted to explain some of the chief Means by which Individual and National Virtue and Happiness may be strengthened and guarded: and to point out some of the most fatal causes of the Decline and Fall of Nations.

"At the commencement of each Session, several Lectures are delivered, containing a Prospectus of the whole Course, which contains a hundred Lectures.

"Each alternate year the Professor delivers a Course of Fifty Lectures on Political Economy. He follows, in a great measure, the order observed in the *Wealth of Nations;* and, in explaining the doctrines of SMITH, compares them with those of RICARDO."

little consequence. There was nothing for it but to beat or be beaten. He was soon "in position;" and, before his unknown adversary well knew what was coming, the skilled fist of the Professor had planted such a "facer" as did not require repetition. Another "round" was not called for; and leaving the discomfited champion to recover at his leisure, the Professor walked coolly away to take his seat in the stage-coach, about to start for Edinburgh. He just reached it in time to secure a place inside, where he found two young men already seated. As a matter of course he entered into conversation with them, and before the journey was half over, they had become the best friends in the world. He asked all sorts of questions about their plans and prospects, and was informed they were going to attend College during the winter session. Among the classes mentioned were Leslie's, Jameson's, Wilson's, and some others. "Oh! Wilson; he is a queer fellow, I am told; rather touched here" (pointing significantly to his head); "odd, decidedly odd." The lads, somewhat cautiously, after the manner of their country, said they had heard strange stories reported of Professor Wilson, but it was not right to believe everything; and that they would judge for themselves when they saw him. "Quite right, lads; quite right; but I assure you I know something of the fellow myself, and I think he is a queer devil; only this very forenoon at Hawick he got into a row with a great lubberly fellow for some unknown cause of offence, and gave him such a taste of his fist as won't soon be forgotten; the whole place was ringing with the story; I wonder you did not hear

of it." "Well," rejoined the lads, "we did hear something of the sort, but it seemed so incredible that a Professor of Moral Philosophy should mix himself up with disreputable quarrels at a fair, we did not believe it." Wilson looked very grave, agreed that it was certainly a most unbecoming position for a Professor; yet he was sorry to say that having heard the whole story from an eye-witness, it was but too true. Dexterously turning the subject, he very soon banished all further discussion about the "Professor," and held the delighted lads enchained in the interest of his conversation until they reached the end of the journey. On getting out of the coach, they politely asked him, as he seemed to know Edinburgh well, if he would direct them to a hotel. "With pleasure, my young friends; we shall all go to a hotel together; no doubt you are hungry and ready for dinner, and you shall dine with me." A coach was called; Wilson ordered the luggage to be placed outside, and gave directions to the driver, who in a short time pulled up at a very nice-looking house, with a small garden in front. The situation was rural, and there was so little of the aspect of a hotel about the place, that on alighting, the lads asked once or twice, if they had come to the right place? "All right, gentlemen; walk in; leave your trunks in the lobby. I have settled with the driver, and now I shall order dinner." No time was lost, and very soon the two youths were conversing freely with their unknown friend, and enjoying themselves extremely in the satisfactory position of having thus accidentally fallen into such good company and good quarters. The deception,

however, could not be kept up much longer; and, in the course of the evening, Wilson let them know where they were, telling them that they could now judge for themselves what sort of a fellow "the Professor" was.

Another anecdote of holiday-time relates to a later period, when maturer years had invested the Professor with a more patriarchal dignity and sedateness. True to his love for spring, he had selected that season for an excursion to the pastoral vales of Yarrow and Ettrick, where glittering rivers,

> "Winding through the pomp of cultivated nature,"

attracted more than one poet's admiration; for if Wordsworth sang in verse, Wilson uttered in prose how "in spirit all streams are one that flow through the forest. Ettrick and Yarrow come rushing into each other's arms, aboon the haughs o' Selkirk, and then flow Tweed-blent to the sea." In the month of May, he sent an invitation to his students resident in the south of Scotland, to meet him at "Tibby Shiels's," where they were to wander a day with him "to enjoy the first gentle embrace of spring in some solitary spot." Where could it have been better selected than at St. Mary's Loch? It was said that the meeting was one of unspeakable delight; the hills were adorned with the freshest green, and the calm, quiet lake reflected the surrounding verdure in its deep waters, and they beheld

> "The swan on still St. Mary's lake,
> Float double swan and shadow."

The Professor spoke of the love of nature, and his words impressed them all, and of the poet of Altrive, "our

own shepherd, dear to all the rills that issue, in thousands, from their own recesses among the braes; for when a poet walks through regions his genius has sung, all nature does him homage, from cloud to clod—from the sky to green earth—all living creatures therein included, from eagle to the mole. James knows this, and is happy among the hills." And was that little company then assembled by the "dowie holms," not happy too? Wilson was in his brightest mood; no one was overlooked; joyously and pleasantly passed the day; and before evening laid its westering shadows into gloaming, he called his students around him, and, rising up, "he shook his wild locks among them, blessed them, called them his children," and bade them adieu. Surely a kindly recognition of these young men in manner such as this would bring benefit with it not less lasting, than when, in graver state, he prelected, *ex cathedra*, to his assembled class.

We get an idea of what that class was from the following recollections, which Mr. John Hill Burton has kindly sent to me. He says:—

"I first saw and made the acquaintance of Professor Wilson when I joined his class in 1830. The occasion was of much more interest to me than the usual first sight of an instructor by a pupil. I do not know if there be anything of the same kind now, but in that day there was a peculiar devotion to *Blackwood's Magazine* among young readers in the north. All who were ambitious of looking beyond their class exercises, considered this the fountainhead of originality and spirit in literature. The articles of the last number were dis-

cussed critically in the debating societies, and knowingly in the supper parties, and the writing of the master-hand was always anxiously traced. To see that master, then, for the first time, was an epoch in one's life.

"The long-looked for first sight of a great man often proves a disappointment to the votary. It was far otherwise in this instance. Much as I had heard of his appearance, it exceeded expectation, and I said to myself that, in the tokens of physical health and strength, intellect, high spirit, and all the elements of masculine beauty, I had not seen his equal. There was a curious contrast to all this in the adjuncts of his presence—the limp Geneva gown, and the square, box-shaped desk, over which he seemed like some great bust set on a square plinth—but I question if any robes or chair of state would have added dignity to his appearance.

"On a very early day in the session—I forget whether it was quite the first—we suddenly came to an acquaintance, on my having occasion to speak with him at the end of the lecture. When he found that I was an Aberdonian, he asked me if I knew Tarland, 'a place celebrated for its markets.' To be sure I did; and Tarland was in those days not a place to be easily forgotten. On the border of the Highlands, it had been a great mart for smuggled whisky; and though the reduction of the excise duties had spoiled that trade, custom continued it for a while in a modified shape, and the wild ruffianly habits it had nourished were still in their prime, and not likely to disappear until the generation trained to them had passed away. The Professor had seen and experienced the ways of the place. He hinted, with a sort of

half-sarcastic solemnity, that he was there in the course of the ethical inquiries to which he had devoted himself; just as the professor of natural history or any other persevering geologist might be found where any unusual geological phenomenon is developed, or the professor of anatomy might conduct his inquiries into some abnormal structure of the human body. His researches might lead him into trials and perils, as those of zealous investigators are often apt to do. In fact he had to draw upon his early acquired knowledge of the art of self-defence on the occasion, and he believed he did so not unsuccessfully. Here there was a sparkle of the eye, a curl of the lip, and a general look of fire and determination, which reminded one of

> 'The stern joy which warriors feel
> In foemen worthy of their steel.'

"He described the market-day as a sort of continued surge of rioting, drinking, and fighting; and when darkness was coming on, he had to find his way to some distance among unknown roads. A lame man, very unsuited for that wild crowd, had in the meantime scraped a sort of acquaintance with him, and interested him by the scholarship interspersed in his conversation. He was the schoolmaster of a neighbouring parish; and as their ways lay together, he was to be the guide, and, in return, to get the assistance of the stalwart stranger. The poor schoolmaster had, however, so extensively moistened his clay, that assistance was not sufficient, and the Professor had to throw him over his shoulder, and carry him. With the remainder of the dominie's physical strength, too, oozed away that capacity for

threading the intricacies of the path, which was his contribution to the joint adventure. Assistance had to be got from some of the miscellaneous Highlanders dispersing homewards; and as all were anxious to bear a hand, the small group increased into a sort of procession, and the Professor reached his abode, wherever that might be, at the head of a sort of army of these lawless men.

"A history of this kind was calculated to put a young person at ease, in the presence of the great man and the Professor of Moral Philosophy. We now sailed easily into conversation, and went off into metaphysics. That he should seriously and earnestly talk on such matters with the raw youth was, of course, very gratifying; but there was a sort of misgiving, that he took for granted my knowing more than I did. This was a way of his, however, to which I became accustomed; he was always ready to give people credit for extensive learning. There was no mere hollow courtesy or giving the go-bye in his talk on this occasion. He helped me at once to the root of many important things connected with the studies I was pursuing. A point arose, on which he would speak to Sir William Hamilton, who knew all about it; he did afterwards speak to him accordingly, somewhat to my surprise, as I thought he would be unlikely to remember either me or my talk,—and I thus made an acquaintance which afterwards strengthened into an admiring friendship for that great man. Then another point came up, on which De Quincey might be consulted, and would give very curious information, if he could be caught. He was then dwelling with the

Professor—as much as he could be said to dwell anywhere. Suppose then I should come and dine with them? That would be my best chance of seeing De Quincey. That it was quite right to take advantage of this frank invitation, and, an obscure stranger, to catch at an opportunity of thrusting myself on the hospitalities and the family circle of a distinguished man, may be questioned. But most people will admit that the temptation was great. It was too much for me, and I accepted, with immense satisfaction.

"I went to Gloucester Place accordingly. The poet's residence did not represent the traditional garret, nor his guests the eccentric troop familiar to Smollett and Fielding, although I had gone there to meet one who had the reputation of bringing into the nineteenth century the habits of that age in their most grotesque shape. Him, however, I did not see. The Opium-Eater was supposed to be somewhere about the premises, but he chose neither to appear in the drawing-room nor the dining-room, and years passed before I became acquainted with the most peculiar man of genius, in Britain at least, of the age. Otherwise, there was good company, handsomely housed, and entertained with hospitality thoroughly kind, easy, and hearty, but all in perfect taste and condition.

"It was a sort of epoch to myself, and therefore I remember pretty well who were present. We had Professor Jameson, then at the zenith of his fame as a mineralogist, Lawrence M'Donald, the sculptor, and John Malcolm, then a popular poet and writer of miscellanies, whose fame, though considerable then, has

probably been worn out ere this day; he was, as I knew him afterwards, a pleasant, gentle, meditatively-inclined man, though I think he had seen military service, and knew the mess-room of the old war,—a different thing from that of the present day. Youngest, as well as I remember, of these seniors, was a Captain Alexander, whom I take to be the traveller, Sir J. E. Alexander.

"Among my own contemporaries, were some representatives of young Edinburgh, of whom a word or two presently, and a Pole, who happened to be the only guest with whom I had any previous acquaintance. His formal designation was Leon Count Lubienski. Seeing a good deal of him afterwards during the five months' session, I formed a great idea of his abilities. He had nothing of the imaginative, or of the æsthetic—a term then coming into use from Germany; but for an eye to the practical, and a capacity for mastering all knowledge leading in that direction, it did not happen to me to find his equal among my contemporaries. With all the difficulties of language against him, he carried off from young Edinburgh the first prize in the civil law class. After having astonished us throughout the session, he left us at the end, and I never could discover anything of a distinct kind about his career, though I have turned up the initials of his name in the many biographical dictionaries of contemporaries which seem to be a specialty of the present day. I heard, many years since, a vague rumour that he had risen in the Russian service. He was just the man, according to the notions of this country, to be useful to such a government, if he

would consent to serve it. I feel certain, however, that he was a man who could not have escaped being heard of by the world, had his career in practical life lain elsewhere than in a close despotism.

"Such was the outer circle of guests; within was the Professor's own family. And so hither I found myself transferred, as by a wave of an enchanter's wand, a raw, unknown youth, with claim of no kind in the shape of introduction, with no credentials or testimony to my bare respectability; no name, even of a common friend, to bring our conversation to an anchor with. This success seems far more surprising when looked back upon than it was felt at the time. Young people read in novels of such things, and therefore are not astonished by them; but in after life they become aware of their extreme uncommonness. Nor was it a mere casual act of formal hospitality; I received afterwards many a cordial welcome within those hospitable doors.

"It is possibly its personal bearing that makes me now remember pretty distinctly a good-humoured and kindly pleasantry of the Professor's at that first dinner. I have mentioned that there were some representatives of young Edinburgh present. I do not know what precise position towards the rest of the human race the youth of Edinburgh may now claim, but it appeared to me, when I came among them at the time I speak of, that they considered it beyond any kind of question that they were superior to all the rest of the world. To one coming from the common hard drudgery of our classes in the North, where we did our work zealously enough, with plenty of internal rivalry, but thought no

more of claiming fame outside the walls than any body of zealous mechanics, it was a great novelty to get among a community, where the High School dux of 18—, or the gainer of the gold medal in the —— class, was pointed out to you; nay, further, to meet with lads of your own standing, who were the authors of published poems, had delivered great and telling speeches at the Speculative, or had written capital articles in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, or the *University Album*. Whether it were the inheritance of the long hierarchy of literary glory which Edinburgh had enjoyed, or arose from any other cause, this phenomenon was marvellous to a stranger, and rather disagreeably marvellous, because a youth coming into all this brilliant light, out of the Bœotian darkness of Aberdeen, was conscious of being contemplated with compassionate condescension. We had, however, at the University of Edinburgh at that time, a considerable body of Aberdonians, pretty compactly united. At our head was William Spalding, the first among us in learning and accomplishments, as well as in the means of using them. He well justified our expectations by his subsequent career, sadly impeded as it was by bodily ailments, which brought it to an untimely close. I have got into an episode in mentioning him here, but it is not entirely inappropriate, for the Professor was, as I believe he has been in many other instances, the first who, from a high place, took notice of Spalding's capacity.

"Well, emboldened and elated, I suppose, by being brought into social equality with them, it came to pass that, in our after-dinner talk, I threw down the gauntlet

to the representatives of young Edinburgh then present, and stood for the equality, at least, if not the superiority of Aberdeen in all the elements of human eminence. In such a contest, a good deal depends on the number of names, in any way known to fame, that the champion remembers; and Aberdeen possessed, especially if one drew on the far past, a very fair stock of celebrities. As I was giving them forth, amidst a good deal of derisive laughter and ironical cheering, the Professor, tickled by the absurdity of the thing, threw himself into the contest, on my side, and tumbled over some of my antagonists in an extremely delectable manner. This was a first revelation to me of a power which I afterwards often observed with astonishment,—a kind of intellectual gladiatorship, which enabled him, in a sort of rollicking, playful manner, to overthrow his adversary with little injury to him, but much humiliation. I can compare it to nothing it so much resembles as a powerful, playful, good-natured mastiff taking his sport with a snarling cur. As I shall have to mention more especially, this was a powerful instrument of discipline in his class. He never had to stand on his dignity. When it was worth his while, he tumbled any transgressor about in a way that made him, though unhurt, thoroughly ashamed of himself, and an example to deter others from doing the like. On the occasion referred to, it was possibly visible to the bystanders, and had I possessed more experience, might have been known to myself, that I also had been gently laid sprawling in the attacks that seemed directed entirely against my adversaries; but I happily saw only their discomfiture,

and rejoiced accordingly. All that was done for me was, however, entirely neutralized by a random shaft from the Pole, finding mark he never meant, and piercing more effectually than all the artillery of my opponents. Looking with an air of intense gravity on the whole discussion, he broke in with the inquiry, whether he was right or not in his supposition, that 'Apperdeen was verray illoustrious for the making of stockingks?' After this, there was no use of saying more on either side.

"I wish I had tried to Boswellize, or could now remember the talk of that, as of many other evenings. One little incident I remember distinctly, but I am sure I shall be unable to tell it to any effect. Some priggish remarks having been made by some one on the power of exhaustive analysis, the Professor fell to illustrate it by an attempt, through that process, to send a hired assistant, name unknown, for a fresh bottle of claret. He began calling to him by the ordinary names, John, James, William, Thomas, and so on, but none hit the mark—the man standing by the sideboard, in demure contemplation, as if inwardly solving some metaphysical difficulty. The Professor then passed on in a wild discursive flight through stranger names. At last he seemed to have hit the right one, for the attendant darted forward. It was, in fact, in obedience to a sign by a guest that he was wanted, but it came in immediate response to a thoroughly unconventional designation,—Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, or something of that sort; and the fun was enhanced by the man's solemn unconsciousness that he had been the object of a logical experiment.

"But to come back to the class. It was one that must have been somewhat memorable to the Professor himself, when he looked back upon it in after years. Not only was his son John in it, but it included John Thomson Gordon and William Edmondstoune Aytoun, so that unconsciously the Professor was instructing the future husbands of his daughters. There were others to give it interest and repute—as Archibald Swinton, now Professor of Civil law; the clever Pole I have already referred to; John Walker Ord, who showed poetic powers which promised a considerable harvest; and Thomas Todd Stoddart, who had won laurels, and thoroughly enjoyed them too, in his published poem of 'The Death Wake.'

"The powers of Wilson as an instructor and a public speaker will, of course, be described by others. I may simply say that attendance at his class, at the same time that it was an act of duty, rewarded the student with what duty seldom brings, the enjoyment of an oration alive with brilliant and powerful eloquence.

"Saturday was a great day of enjoyment of a more egotistic kind. Then he spoke on the essays he had received. He gave us a breadth of topics, and allowed us wonderful latitude in the handling of them—but he certainly read them all—and what a mass of trash he must have thus perused! In criticising them, he was charitable and cordial to the utmost stretch of magnanimous charity. I can hardly say what an exciting thrill it imparted to the youth to hear his own composition read out from that high place, and commented

on with earnestness, and not without commendation. The recollection of these days sometimes also recalls Boswell's garrulous account of his first symposium with Johnson. 'The Orthodox and High Church sound of THE MITRE; the figure and manner of the celebrated Samuel Johnson; the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced.' But *our* elevation proceeded from entirely intellectual sources, without the aid of the other stimulants which contributed to Boswell's glory. Altogether, that class was a scene of enjoyment which remains in my mind entirely distinct from even the pleasanter portion of other work-day college life.

"The class was a very large one. I have referred to the Professor's peculiar power of preserving discipline, or rather of keeping up good-humour, gentlemanly fellowship, and order, without the necessity of discipline. An instance occurred during the session, when he exercised this power in a matter not peculiar to his own class, not indeed showing itself within the class, but general to the students at large, as a portion of the inhabitants of Edinburgh having a common tie. There was a great snow-ball riot in that session. This is a thing peculiar to Edinburgh, and not easily made intelligible to those who have not witnessed it. As a stranger it surprised me much. In the north we had our old feuds and animosities, often breaking out in serious violence and mischief. But that a set of people—most of them full-

grown—should, without any settled feud, utterly change the whole tenor of their conduct, and break into something like insurrection, merely because snow was on the ground, appeared to be a silliness utterly incomprehensible. This snow-ball affair became so formidable-looking that a mounted foreign refugee, with his head full of revolutions, galloped through the streets (I forget if he was in any way armed) calling out 'Barricade—shoot!'

"After it was pretty well over, the Professor made a speech to us on the conclusion of his daily lecture. He did not condemn or even disparage snow-balling; on the contrary, he expressed glowingly his sense of its sometimes irresistible attractions. These he illustrated by what had once occurred to himself and a venerable and illustrious friend; we thought at the time that he meant Dr. Chalmers. In a spring walk among the hills, and in the middle of a semi-metaphysical discussion, they came upon a snow-wreath. By a sort of simultaneous impulse, borne on the recollection of early days, the discussion stopped, and they fell too to a regular hard bicker. After working away till they were covered with snow, panting with fatigue, and glowing red with the exertion, they both stopped, and laughed loud in each other's face; just such a laugh as he must have then expressed, did the Professor force upon his class. Then came his contrast between such a scene and a fracas in the dirty streets, where low-bred ruffians took the opportunity to get out some bit of petty revenge or of mere wanton cruelty, or of insolence to those whose character and

position entitled them to deference; and so he went on until there could not be a question that every one in the class who had been concerned in the affair felt ashamed of himself. His practical conclusion was that they should have their bicker, certainly, but—adjourn it from the College quadrangle and the street to the Pentland hills.

"We naturally, among ourselves, talked over any little instances illustrative of the remarkable power of making any one whom he had to rebuke or correct feel foolish. For instance, there used to be a set of dusky personages who then stood at the corner of certain streets, and annoyed the passenger by stepping up right in front of him like an established acquaintance, and saying, 'Any old clothes?' It was said that the way in which the Professor on such an occasion turned round on the intruder, and said, 'Yes; have you any?' had such an effect, that the word was passed through the tribe, and he never was again addressed by any of its members.

"I remember a very strong negative testimony to this peculiar power, in the circumstance of his entire freedom from the persecutions of two licensed tormentors, who were the terror of all the rest of the professors. They were men of venerable years and weak intellect, who had established a sort of prescriptive right to attend such classes as they might honour with their presence. It was not of course their mere presence, but the use to which it was put by tricky students, that made the standing grief of the professors. One of them was called Sir Peter Nimmo,

a dirty, ill-looking lout, who had neither wit himself, nor any quality with a sufficient amount of pleasant grotesqueness in it to create wit in others. I believe he was merely an idly-inclined and stupidish man of low condition, who, having once got into practice as a sort of public laughing-stock, saw that the occupation paid better than honest industry, and had cunning enough to keep it up. He must have had a rather hard time of it, however, in some respects, for it was an established practice to get hold of the cards of important personages—especially if they were as testy as they were important—and to present them to Sir Peter with a request that he would favour the person indicated with his company at dinner. He always went, pretending simplicity, and using a little caution, if he saw symptoms of strong measures. I suppose he sometimes got a meal that way, following an old Scottish saying about taking 'the bite with the buffet.' He always called himself *Sir* Peter. It was said that a man of high title had professed to knight him in a drunken frolic. He wandered about sometimes endeavouring to establish himself as a sponge in country houses. Strangely enough, he thus got the ear of Wordsworth, who showed him attention. He used the Professor's name, and Wordsworth, as I heard, talked of him as a Scotch baronet, eccentric in appearance, but fundamentally one of the most sensible men he ever met with. The Professor remarked that this compliment was no doubt owing to Sir Peter having judiciously preserved silence, and allowed Wordsworth to pour into his ear unceasingly the even tenor of his loquacity.

"The other of this strange pair was a rather more interesting creature. He was called Dr. Syntax. He had of course another name, but of that the public knew nothing. The Tour of Dr. Syntax in search of the picturesque, with its doggerel rhymes and extravagant illustrations, had not then quite lost the great popularity it enjoyed. The representations of the hero were intended to be gross caricatures, but the structure of his namesake was so supernaturally protracted and spidery as closely to approach the proportions of the caricature. His costume, probably by no design of his own, completed the likeness. This being, if seen in the street, was always marching along with extreme rapidity, with his portfolio under his arm, as if full of important business, unless, indeed, he had just got a present of a turban, a yeoman's helmet, or some other preposterous decoration, when he would stand exhibiting himself wherever a crowd happened to pass. He honoured the various professors and clergy of Edinburgh with his attendance at their lectures and sermons. He always chose the most conspicuous place he could find. There, with his long, demure, cadaverous face, on which a stray smile would have been at once frozen, he proceeded to business and spread out his portfolio. He sometimes took notes of what was said, at others took the portrait of the speaker; it may be presumed that in church he limited himself to the former function. If it grew dark, he would solemnly draw from his pocket a small taper and strike a light, determined not to be interrupted in his duties, and in the centre of the general

gloom a small disk of light would distinguish his countenance, which was as solemn as the grave, yet shed around a degree of restless mirth which spoiled many a lecture, and must have sadly jumbled the devotions of the church-goers. I believe every professor received a full share of this man's attentions except Wilson. His literary ally, the Professor of Civil Law, a man endowed with a great fund of humour, which, however, he could not convert like him into defensive armour, suffered dreadfully from Syntax, and when the pale face was visible in the highest desk, we knew that a day was lost, the poor Lecturer having enough to do in keeping down internal convulsions of laughter, which seemed as if they would explode and shatter his frame to pieces.

"Both these tormentors, of whom I have, perhaps, said too much, stood in wholesome dread of Wilson. It was, I have no doubt, by effectually treating them according to their folly, that he earned this exemption, in which his brethren must have greatly envied him.

"Before that session came to an end, an event occurred momentous to all of us — the Reform Bill was brought in. We youths had previously indulged in no politics, or if in any, they were of a mild Aristides and Brutus kind, tinged perhaps by De Lolme and the Letters of Junius. Now, however, we were at once separated into two hostile forces. To the liberals, *Blackwood's Magazine,* ceasing to be the guiding-star of literature, had become the watchfire of the enemy. The bitterness of the hostility felt at that time by

the young men of the two opposite political creeds cannot easily be understood by those in the same stage of life at the present day. The friendship must have been fast indeed that remained after one friend had become a reformer and the other an anti-reformer. We used to make faces at each other as we passed; and if a few words were exchanged, they were hostile and threatening. I suppose our hostility was a type of a stage of transition between the ferocity of times of civil war and the mild political partisanship of the present day.

"The Professor was known to take his stand against the Bill with great vehemence, but I never knew more than one instance of an approach to an ebullition of it upon any of his friends on our side. There had been many Reform meetings of all kinds, sometimes assembling vast multitudes, when it occurred to attempt a Tory meeting—the word Conservative had not then been invented. A question arose among us whether they should be allowed to have it their own way, and, since they called the meeting public, whether our party should not go and out-vote them. The tactic of public meetings, as simply one-sided demonstrations of the strength of a party, was not then understood, and they were confounded with meetings of representative bodies, where strength is tried by discussing and voting. A friend of the Professor's, older than the youngsters of his class, but a good deal younger than himself, was known strongly to favour an invasion of the meeting from our side. He called on the Professor presently before the meeting; it was a friendly visit, but par-

tially, I presume, for the purpose of sounding the Professor on the exciting question. Just before leaving, he expressed a hope that there would be no disturbance. The Professor, drawing himself up, answered, as well as I can remember having heard, in this wise: 'What any set of blackguards may be prepared to attempt in these days I cannot predict; but I *can* say, that if I see any man who is on terms of acquaintance with *me* go to that meeting to meddle with it, I hope I may be the first—(a pause)—to kick him out into the street.' And the visitor said the Professor looked as if he were so close on the point of rehearsing this performance on the spot, that he involuntarily started a good pace back.

"Though politics entered deeply into our social and literary intercourse at that time, yet the Professor was strong enough in his other elements of distinction to keep himself aloof, and remain untouched in his other relations by the influence of party, without in the least degree putting in question the sincerity of his attachment to his own side. He made in the class just one allusion to politics, and it was emphatic. An ambitious student, in one of his essays, finding his way to the characteristics of democracy, made some allusions to passing events in a tone which he no doubt thought likely to secure the favour of the Professor. We never would have known of this effort had it not been read out in full to us in the class, and followed by a severe rebuke on the introduction of politics to a place where party strife should be unknown."

Another student,[1] who attended the class seven years

[1] The Rev. William Smith, of North Leith Church.

later, fortunately preserved his notes, and sends me the following vivid recollections of the winter session of 1837 :—

"Of Professor Wilson as a lecturer on Moral Philosophy, it is not easy to convey any adequate idea to strangers,—to those who never saw his grand and noble form excited into bold and passionate action behind that strange, old-fashioned desk, nor heard his manly and eloquent voice sounding forth its stirring utterances with all the strange and fitful cadence of a music quite peculiar to itself. The many-sidedness of the man, and the unconventional character of his prelections, combine to make it exceedingly difficult to give any full analysis of his course, or to define the nature and grounds of his wonderful power as a lecturer. I am certain that if every student who ever attended his class were to place on record his impressions of these, the impressions of each student would be widely different, and yet they would not, taken all together, exhaust the subject, or supply a complete representation either of his matter or his manner. There was so much in the look and tone, in every aspect and in every movement of the man, which touched and swayed the student at the time, but which cannot now be recalled, described, or even realized, that any reminiscence by any one can be interesting only to those whose memories of the same scenes enable them to follow out the train of recollection, or complete the picture which it may suggest.

"I attended his class in session 1837-8. It was the session immediately succeeding the loss of his wife,

the thought of which, as it was ever again and again re-awakened in his mind by allusions in his lectures, however remote, to such topics as death, bereavement, widowhood, youthful love, domestic scenes, and, above all, to conjugal happiness, again and again shook his great soul with an agony of uncontrollable grief, the sight of which was sufficient to subdue us all into deep and respectful sympathy with him. On such occasions he would pause for a moment or two in his lecture, fling himself forward on the desk, bury his face in his hands, and while his whole frame heaved with visible emotion, he would weep and sob like a very child.

"The roll of papers on which each lecture was written, which he carried into the class-room firmly grasped in his hand, and suddenly unrolled and spread out on the desk before him, commencing to read the same moment, could not fail to attract the notice of any stranger in his class-room. It was composed in large measure of portions of old letters—the addresses and postage-marks on which could be easily seen as he turned the leaf, yet it was equally evident that the writing was neat, careful, and distinct; and, except in a more than usually dark and murk day, it was read with perfect ease and fluency.

"In the course of lectures which I attended, he began by treating of the desire of knowledge; the feeling of admiration; sympathy; desire of society; emulation; envy; anger; revenge; self; self-esteem; the love of fame or glory, and the love of power.

"The most memorable points in these lectures were, (1.) a highly wrought description of Envy, founded on

Spenser's picture of Lucifera riding in the gorgeous chariot of Pride, and preceded by six Passions (the fifth of which is Envy) riding each on an appropriate animal; (2.) a very minute and purely metaphysical analysis of the idea of Self; and (3.), a highly poetical illustration of the workings of the Love of Power. This last display I can never forget; and sure am I that no one present can ever forget it either. It appeared to have been a lecture whose place in the course and powerful eloquence were previously not unknown to fame. For when I went to the class-room at the usual hour on the last day of November, I found it already overcrowded with an audience, comprising many strangers of note and several professors, all in a high state of expectation. Conspicuous in the centre of the front bench was the new Professor of Logic, Sir William Hamilton, eager with anticipation as the others. At length the door of the retiring-room was thrown open, and with even firmer step and longer stride, and more heroic gait than usual, the Professor with his flowing gown and streaming locks advanced to the desk, and began the lecture. After a hasty recapitulation of the subjects discussed in previous lectures, he proceeded somewhat thus; I can give but the feeblest sketch of the lecture:—

"'Towards the close of yesterday's lecture we came to the consideration of another active principle, "The Love of Power," and we remarked on the frequent corruption and melancholy degradation of genius through an inordinate love of power. The origin of this love of power is found in the feeling of pleasure which uniformly, and in a proportionably greater or less degree,

attends the consciousness of possessing power. Even in lower creation we see this feeling of pleasure shown. The eagle evidently enjoys a deep sensation of pleasure as he cuts his unmarked path through the storm-tossed clouds. The horse also, when in the fulness of his strength he hastens o'er the course, outstripping all his rivals, is a supremely happy as well as an exquisitely beautiful animal. The child too attains a never-failing source of pleasure on his first consciousness of possessing powers, and he is overwhelmed with grief and vexation when he meets with any obstacle which presents an insurmountable obstruction to his free and unfettered exercise of these powers.

"'All the principles which the human being possesses have been given to him for the purpose of enabling him to fight his way through scenes of trouble, and difficulty, and danger, and it has been also wisely decreed that the exercise of these principles or powers, when crowned with success, should afford him pleasure. The woodsman who is engaged in felling pines in the awful depths of the American forest, derives pleasure from the consciousness of power, as he sees giant after giant laid low at his feet by the prowess of his own unaided arm, at the same time that he is usefully employed in clearing out a domain for the support, it may be, of his wife and family. The lonely hunter feels a pleasure in his powers as he brings down the towering bird of Jove by his unerring ball, or as he meets a boar in deadly conflict, and drains the heart's blood of the brute with his spear. The savage fisherman of the far north, as he goes in his frail canoe to

pursue the most perilous of all enterprises, feels a pleasure in his powers, as he triumphs by the skill of his rude harpoon over even the mightiest denizens of the deep. The peasant from his conscious feeling of manly power in every muscle of his stalwart frame derives pleasure, and, at the same time, the ability to sustain all the trials and conquer all the difficulties which cross him on his toil-worn path. The life of the scholar is as much a life of difficulty as the life of the traveller who plods on his way through unknown countries, and requires in a high degree the sense of power to cheer and sustain him on his course; for we all know that conquests in the kingdom of intelligence are not to be won by one day's battle. . . .

"'If the mind needs support in its search after virtue, it must much more need it in the ordinary business and pursuits of life.

"'To be weak is miserable doing or suffering. . . .

"'It has often occurred to us that the most debased and humiliating state in which human nature could be found, is that where men have calmly bowed themselves under the disadvantages in which nature has seen fit originally to place them, without a single stout-hearted effort to relieve themselves from them, as, for instance, in the case of the inhabitants of New Holland, as they were described by those who first visited the island. And what a contrast is visible between their character and that of the North American Indians vanquishing the feeling of pain in their breasts by the strength of their unconquerable wills; "The Stoics of the wood, the men without a tear."

"'Let us picture to our mind's eye a pampered Sybarite, nursed in all the wantonness of high-fed luxury, dallying on a downy sofa, amid all the gorgeousness of ornamental tapestry, listening to the soft sounds of sweetest music playing in his ears; his eyes satiated with pleasure in contemplating the enchanting pictures that decorate the walls, and the beautiful statues which in pleasing variety fill up the distant vistas of his palace; whose rest would be broken, whose happiness would be spoiled, by the doubling of the highly scented rose-leaf that lies beneath him on his silken couch. Let us by the magic power of imagination transport this man to the gloomy depths of an American forest, where the dazzling glare of a bright fire instantly meets his eye. If he does not forthwith ignominiously expire at the first view, suppose him to survey the characters who compose or fill up the busy scene around it. The barbarous savages of one tribe have taken captive the chief of another engaged in deadly hostilities with them. They have not impaled him alive. That would be to consign him too speedily to unhearing death. But they have tied him fast with bands made of the long and lithe forest grass, which yields not quickly to the fire. They have placed him beside the pile which they kindle with fiendish satisfaction, and feed with cautious hand, well knowing the point or pitch to raise it to, which tortures but not speedily consumes. They have exhausted all their energy in uttering a most diabolical yell, on witnessing their victim first feel the horrid proofs of their resentment, and now seated on the grass around, they look on in silence. The chief stands firm

with unflinching nerve; his long eye-lashes are scorched off, but his proud eye disdains to wink; his dark raven locks have all perished, but there is not a wrinkle seen on his forehead. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot his skin is one continued blister, but the courage of his soul remains unshaken, and quails not before the tormenting pain. The Sybarite has expired at the mere sight; his craven heart has ceased to beat. The Indian hero stands firm. There is even a smile on his sadly marred cheek, and it is not the smile which is extorted by excruciating pain, and forms the fit accompaniment of a groan, but he smiles with joy as he chants his death-song. He thinks with pride and joy on the heroic deeds he has performed; how he has roamed from sunset to sunrise through the forest depths, and changed the sleep of his foemen into death. He beholds on all sides dancing around him the noble spirits of his heroic ancestors; and nearest to him, and almost, he imagines, within reach of his embrace, he sees the ghost of his father, who first put into his hand and taught him the use of the scalping-knife and tomahawk; who has come from the heavens far beyond the place of mountains and of clouds to quaff the death-song, and to welcome to the land of the great hereafter the spirit of his undegenerate son. The chief is inflamed with a glorious rapture that exalts him beyond the sensation of pain, and conquers agony. "He holds no parley with unmanly fears."

> "The son of Alcnomon has ceased to endure;
> He consented to die, but he scorned to complain."

"'It seems a duty incumbent on us all to think well of ourselves and of our powers. But then comes the question, Where falls the limit to be fixed at which this feeling must cease? We answer, Nature and the real necessities of life discover to a man the actual extent of his powers. Nature, reality, and truth, are the only tests. . . .

"'To show that the innate consciousness of power often sustains a person amidst severely trying difficulties, we may relate a well-authenticated anecdote of Nelson. When a very young man in the rank of midshipman, he was returning from India on sick leave, with his health broken by the climate, and his spirits depressed by the feeling that he was cast off from his profession, and that he could never rise further in it. Sitting one day solitarily, meditating on all this, his thoughts reverted to the great naval heroes who had fought and won his country's battles, and gained for England the empire of the deep; when a bright ray of hope seemed to shine before him, that filled his soul with intense pleasure, and made him exclaim: "I will be a hero; England will not cast me off; England's king will be my patron and my friend." He often after spoke of this ray which did indeed blaze forth, and lighted his path to renown, till the noble watchword of Trafalgar insured his last and crowning triumph, and the name of Nelson was known as widely as the name of England.'

"This faint sketch taken at the time may serve, with all its imperfections, to give some idea of the substance of this noble lecture, but it cannot convey to any

not present the slightest conception of the transcendent power and overwhelming eloquence with which it was delivered, or of its electrifying effects upon the audience. The whole soul of the man seemed infused into his subject, and to be rushing forth with resistless force in the torrent of his rapidly-rolling words. As he spoke, his whole frame quivered with emotion. He evidently saw the scene he described, and such was the sympathetic force of his strong poetic imagination, that he made us, whether we would or not, see it too. Now dead silence held the class captive. In the interval of his words you would have heard a pin fall. Again, at some point, the applause could not be restrained, and was vociferous. Especially when the dying scene in his description of the North American Indian's virtues reached its glorious consummation, the cheers were again and again repeated by every voice, till the roof rang again, and Sir William Hamilton, not less enthusiastic in his applause than the very youngest of the students behind him, actually stood up and clapped his hands with evident delight and approbation.

"I have heard some of the greatest orators of the day, —Lords Derby, Brougham, Lyndhurst; Peel, O'Connell, Sheil, Follett, Chalmers, Caird, Guthrie, M'Neile; I have heard some of these in their very best styles make some of their most celebrated appearances; but for popular eloquence, for resistless force, for the seeming inspiration that swayed the soul, and the glowing sympathy that entranced the hearts of his entire audience, that lecture by Professor Wilson far excelled the loftiest efforts of the best of these I ever listened to, and I have

long come to the decided conclusion that if he had chosen the sacred profession, and given his whole heart and soul to his work, he would have raised the fame of pulpit oratory to a pitch far beyond what it ever has reached, and gained a celebrity and success as a preacher second to none in the annals of the Church.

"The course was continued in lectures on (1.) Jealousy, which was illustrated by a very splendid and elaborate analysis of the character of Othello, in which the erroneousness of the common idea of the Moor as a mere victim of the green-eyed monster was very clearly and convincingly exhibited; (2.) The Love of Pleasure; (3.) Hope; (4.) Fear; (5.) Happiness or Misery in this Life arising from the lower principles of humanity; (6.) Association, discussed at great length and with very great metaphysical acumen, as well as copious illustration; (7.) Imagination, treated in nine most interesting lectures; and (8.) Conscience; which, with a full and particular consideration of the various moral systems propounded by ancient and modern philosophy, occupied thirty lectures.

"In the next division of the course the Affections were explained and illustrated in a series of sixteen lectures, in which all the wealth of poetry and pathos that were at his command had ample scope and glorious display in picturing scenes of domestic and social life, and in drawing from the whole field of literature examples of family affection and heroic patriotism. Thus we had the picture of a family—with all its interpenetrating relations, of the elder members towards the younger, and of the elder towards each other; the strong hold which

any absent member retains over the affections of all at home, and the deep reverence and affectionate love with which they all regard the head of the family,—set before us in a manner to rivet attention, by connecting with it a very fine disquisition on Burns's 'Cottar's Saturday Night.' We had the beautiful pictures of filial affection drawn by Sophocles and Shakspere respectively in Antigone and Cordelia, extemporaneously, but most effectively and splendidly described. This *extempore* lecture was immediately followed up by another, delivered also without the aid of any notes, and of a very strange and discursive character, as the heads of it will show:—'Antigone—Electra—Clytemnestra—Agamemnon—Ægisthus—Orestes—Good old Homer who never nods—Ulysses—Achilles—Peleus—The Meeting of Laertes and Achilles—The Lake Poets—Southey and Wordsworth—Apples and Pears—Apple-pie;' but in which the Professor succeeded in demonstrating the vast superiority of the great poets of antiquity, in delineating those simple touches of nature that go to prove the whole world kin. We had then parental affection copiously illustrated in a series of lectures containing highly-wrought pictures of an outcast mother sitting begging by the wayside, of emigrant mothers about to be devoured in a burning ship, and of Virgil's sketches of Evander and Pallas, and Mezentius and Lausus, as contrasted with Wordsworth's sketch of the 'statesman' Michael and his son Luke. One whole lecture was devoted to Shakspere's character of Constance, as exhibiting the workings of maternal affection, and another to Priam's going to ransom the body of Hector

from Achilles. The paternal affections and friendship were next dealt with in the same interesting manner, with illustrative references to the writings of Jeremy Taylor, Lord Bacon, Cicero, Shakspere, Dugald Stewart, Thomson, and Coleridge. This part of the course was wound up by three very able lectures on Patriotism, during the delivery of the last of which one of the few memorable 'scenes' during the session occurred in the class. The Professor had begun the lecture by a very earnest and powerful defence of nationality or patriotism against the attacks of those who prefer a spirit of cosmopolitanism. In the course of this, he had occasion to refer to the views of Coleridge and Chenevix on the character of fallen nations, and particularly to the very peculiar relation in which Scotland had long stood to England; and in dealing with this latter point he was proceeding with the remark, that 'the great Demosthenes of Ireland, the ruler of seven millions of the finest peasantry in the world, had presumed to say at a public meeting that the reason Scotland had never been conquered was that Scotland had never been worth conquering.' I do not know how the lecture as written would have dealt with this charge, for the remark led to an interruption of its delivery. Some Irish students, resenting the contemptuous tone in which their great hero was mentioned, and especially taking offence, perhaps justly, at the comical way in which the word '*pizzantry*' was pronounced, raised first a hiss, and then a howl, which provoked counter-cheering from the more numerous Conservatives present, till the class-room became for a few minutes something like Babel or a bear-garden.

For a little the Professor looked calmly on; but at last, fairly roused by the unusual uproar, he threw his notes aside, and drowning all noise by the stentorian pitch of voice in which he repeated the sentence that had provoked it all, he on the spur of the moment burst forth in a most eloquent and effective denunciation of all demagogues, and of all Irish demagogues in particular, showing in return for O'Connell's contemptuous remark about Scotland, the exact number of English pikemen and archers that had sufficed for the total subjugation of Ireland; and in castigation of those of his students that had hissed him, launching all the shafts of his raillery, and these were both numerous and sharp, at modern Radicalism, and its cant phrase, 'March of Intellect.' The scene was one not to be forgotten. It was the only occasion any expression of political feeling or bias escaped from him; and yet, though he spoke under great excitement and with merciless severity, he said nothing that made him less respected and admired even by those who differed from him in his political views.[1]

"The course was concluded by a series of about twenty lectures on Natural Theology, in which that

[1] The obnoxious reference to the "Liberator" appears to have been subsequently omitted from the lecture; but the topic in reference to which it occurred seems to have been one in which the Professor found some difficulty in restraining his contempt for some of the cants of the day about Progress, March of Intellect, etc. Mr. Nicolson gives me the following extract from his notes of the lectures (1848-9), immediately preceding a quotation from M. Chenevix on the benefits of public instruction as the surest basis of stable government:—"These sentiments are not the growth of late years, as some contemptible persons would seem to insinuate!"

subject was treated in a manner altogether worthy of its vast importance. The great writers, both ancient and modern, were reviewed in a highly philosophical and finely appreciatory spirit. The ability of Hume was fully admitted, and his arguments met as fairly and successfully as they have ever been; but the pretensions of Lord Brougham to authority in the matter were called in question, and some of his views severely criticised. The moral attributes of God; the duties of man to his Maker; religion in the abstract; the immortality and immateriality of the soul; the moral philosophy of the Greeks, and especially the doctrines of Socrates and Plato, were all handled in a way befitting the grandeur and sacredness of these topics, and so as to impress every student with the depth and earnestness of the Professor's religious views and feelings, as well as with the high-toned morality of his whole mind and temperament.

"And now, reviewing generally one's old impressions of the character of the whole course, and qualifying these by the help of subsequent experience and knowledge, there remains a very decided conviction that while the overflowing wealth of poetical reference and illustration, and the somewhat excessive ornamentation of language, were calculated so far to choke and conceal the systematic philosophy of the lectures; to amuse rather than instruct the students; to deprave rather than chasten and purify their style of composition; the high merits and distinguished qualities of the lectures are indisputable, and their tendency to engender free thought, and to encourage large and liberal-minded

study of the works of all the greatest authors, were of the most decided and purely beneficial nature. It has been the fashion in certain quarters to decry his lectures as loose and declamatory; but only with those whose judgment is based on superficial appearances alone, and who are so destitute of everything like sympathy, as to be unable to appreciate excellence that squares not in every point with their pre-conceived idea of it. One indubitable advantage was possessed by all Professor Wilson's students, who had 'eyes to see, and ears to hear,' viz., the advantage of beholding closely the workings of a great and generous mind, swayed by the noblest and sincerest impulses; and of listening to the eloquent utterances of a voice which, reprobating every form of meanness and duplicity, was ever raised to its loftiest pitch in recommendation of high-souled honour, truth, virtue, disinterested love, and melting charity. It was something, moreover, not without value or good effect, to be enabled to contemplate, from day to day, throughout a session, the mere outward aspect of one so evidently every inch a man, nay, a king of men, in whom manly vigour and manly beauty of person were in such close keeping with all the great qualities of his soul; the sight at once carried back the youthful student's imagination to the age of ancient heroes and demigods, when higher spirits walked with men on earth, and made an impression on the opening mind of the most genial and ennobling tendency.

"The Professor was not generally supposed to devote much time in private to the business details and work

of his class. But all who really worked for him soon discovered the utter erroneousness of this supposition. Every essay given in to him, however juvenile in thought and expression, was read by him with the most patient and judiciously critical care. If any essay afforded proof of painstaking research or of nascent power, its author was at once invited to the Professor's house, to enjoy the benefit of private conversation, and to be encouraged and directed in his studies. I can never forget an evening which I spent alone with him in such circumstances, when, after discussing the subject and views of some essay that had taken his fancy, and favouring me with some invaluable hints on these, he launched out into a long and most interesting discourse on most of the great men of his time; and sent me away at a late hour, not only gratified with his noble frankness of nature and manner, but more than ever convinced of his vast and varied powers in almost every field of knowledge. Though my intercourse with him was limited entirely to student life, I retain for him the deepest reverence and love.

"'I cannot deem thee dead; like the perfumes
Arising from Judea's vanish'd shrines,
Thy voice still floats around me; nor can tombs
A thousand from my memory hide the lines
Of beauty, on thine aspect which abode,
Like streaks of sunshine pictured there by God.'"

The following account of his last year's professional work (the session 1850-1851) is furnished by the medallist of the year:[1]—

[1] Mr. Alexander Taylor Innes, who says in reference to that distinction:

"The first thing that every one remarked on entering his class, was how thoroughly he did his proper work as a Professor of Moral Philosophy. This is not generally known now, and was not even at the time. There was a notion that he was there Christopher North, and nothing else; that you could get scraps of poetry, bits of sentiment, flights of fancy, flashes of genius, and anything but Moral Philosophy. Nothing was further from the truth in that year 1850. In the very first lecture he cut into the core of the subject, raised the question which has always in this country been held to be the hardest and deepest in the science (the origin of the Moral Faculty), and *hammered* at it through the great part of the session. Even those who were fresh from Sir William Hamilton's class, and had a morbid appetite for swallowing hard and angular masses of logic, found that the work here was quite stiff enough for any of us. It was not till the latter part of the session, in his lectures on the Affections and the Imagination, that he adopted a looser style of treatment, and wandered freely over a more inviting field. But it is not enough to say that he was thoroughly conscientious in presenting to his students the main questions for their consideration; I am bound to add that he was also thoroughly successful. It is well known that his own doctrine (though it was never quite fixed, and he stated publicly to his class at the close of his last session that

"He was specially kind to me, as the youngest who had ever attained that honour, much coveted at that time as coming from *himself;* for when the University offered to give a prize to his class, he declined to discontinue his own, and still year by year awarded 'Professor Wilson's Gold Medal,' giving the other separately or cumulatively."

he had all along been conscious there was some gap in it) was opposed to the general Scotch system of Moral Philosophy. His *Eudaimonism* was in fact a sublimed Utilitarianism; so refined and sublimed that it might have appeared quite a fair course to have avoided discussing those metaphysical and psychological questions which lie at the roots of the general controversy. He did not follow this course. On the contrary, he laid bare the whole question: Whether conscience be a product of experience, or an original and intuitive faculty, with a frankness and fairness which are exceedingly rare, and which impressed most those who most differed from him; and at the same time with a perception of the *status quæstionis*, how it bore on all that followed, and how the teaching of each philosopher bore upon it, which makes me regard his lectures as the most comprehensive, and indeed the most *valuable* thing in our language on this particular question, with the single exception of Sir James Mackintosh's Dissertation.

"His appearance in his class-room it is far easier to remember than to forget. He strode into it with the professor's gown hanging loosely on his arms, took a comprehensive look over the mob of young faces, laid down his watch so as to be out of the reach of his sledge-hammer fist, glanced at the notes of his lecture (generally written on the most wonderful scraps of paper), and then, to the bewilderment of those who had never heard him before, looked long and earnestly out of the north window, towards the spire of the old Tron Kirk; until, having at last got his idea, he faced round

and uttered it with eye and hand, and voice and soul and spirit, and bore the class along with him. As he spoke, the bright blue eye looked with a strange gaze into vacancy, sometimes sparkling with a coming joke, sometimes darkening before a rush of indignant eloquence; the tremulous upper lip curving with every wave of thought or hint of passion, and the golden-grey hair floating on the old man's mighty shoulders—if indeed that could be called age, which seemed but the immortality of a more majestic youth.[1] And occasionally, in the finer frenzy of his more imaginative passages —as when he spoke of Alexander, clay-cold at Babylon, with the world lying conquered around his tomb, or of the Highland hills, that pour the rage of cataracts adown their riven cliffs, or even of the human mind, with its 'primeval granitic truths,' the grand old face flushed with the proud thought, and the eyes grew dim with tears, and the magnificent frame quivered with a universal emotion.

"It was something to have seen Professor Wilson—this all confessed; but it was something also, and more than is generally understood, to have studied under him."

[1] Of the "discipline in his class" in 1830, alluded to by Mr. Burton, Mr. Nicolson says, twenty years later:—"I shall never forget the foolish appearance presented one day in the class by an unmannerly fellow, who rose from his seat about ten minutes from the close of the hour, and proceeded to the door. He found some difficulty in opening it, and was returning to his place, when the Professor beckoned him to his desk, and, stooping down, asked, in that deep tone of his, kindly, but with a touch of irony in the question, 'Are you unwell, sir?' 'No, sir,' was the answer. 'Then you will have the kindness to wait till the close of the lecture.' The experiment of leaving the class before the termination of the hour was not likely to be again attempted, after such an exhibition."

CHAPTER XI.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1820–26.

In July 1819 the following announcement appeared in the Book-lists, "In the press, 'Lays from Fairy Land,' by John Wilson, author of 'The Isle of Palms,'" etc.

> "Doth grief e'er sleep in a Fairy's breast?
> Are Dirges sung in the land of Rest?
> Tell us, when a Fairy dies,
> Hath she funeral obsequies?
> Are all dreams there, of woe and mirth,
> That trouble and delight on earth?"

In the Magazine for January 1820 one of these lays was published, and it seemed as if the formula, "in the press," really meant something was then preparing for publication, which I believe is all that it generally conveys to the initiated. Beyond that, however, the Lays, if ever in the press, did not show themselves out of it.[1] From dreams of Fairy Land the author had been roused to the unromantic realities of Deacon Paterson and his green bag. The sober certainty of a course of Moral Philosophy lectures took the place of poetic

[1] Unless I except a previous poem, "The Fairies, a Dreamlike Remembrance of a Dream," in the Magazine for April 1818, with the signature of N., evidently his. The subject was a favourite one with him. In one of his Essays there is a very beautiful and fanciful description of a fairies' burial.—See also *Works*, vol. vi. p. 240.

visions, and the "folk of peace" seem thenceforth to have vanished from his view, so far at least as singing about them was concerned. The explanation is cleverly given in the lines of Ensign O'Doherty, in the Magazine for 1821, when the Professor was doubtless still hard at work on the Passions and the Moral Faculty. After "touching off" various other poets, he says,—

> "Let Wilson roam to Fairy-land, but that's
> An oldish story: I'll lay half-a-crown
> The tiny elves are smothered in his gown."

But though the heavy duties of his first session put an end for the time to all other occupations, his literary activity was rather stimulated than otherwise by his elevation to the chair. With trifling exceptions his literary labours were confined exclusively to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and their extent may be guessed from the fact, that for many years his contributions were never fewer on an average than two to each number. I believe that, on more than one occasion, the great bulk of the entire contents of a number was produced by him during the currency of a month. No periodical probably was ever more indebted to the efforts of one individual than "Maga" was to Wilson. His devotion to it was unswerving, and whether his health were good or bad, his spirits cheerful or depressed, his pen never slackened in its service. He became identified with its character, its aims, and its interests; and wearing, as it did, such strong marks of a controlling individuality, it was naturally believed to be under the editorial sway of the hand that first subscribed the formidable initials of "Christopher

North." The first conception of that remarkable personage was, however, as purely mythical as the "Shepherd" of the *Noctes*, and "C. N." notes and criticisms were freely supplied by other hands, under the direction of the really responsible editor, Mr. Blackwood. As my father gradually invested his imaginary ancient with more and more of his personal attributes and experiences, the identification became more complete, till at length John Wilson and Christopher North were recognised as names synonymous. Any repudiation of the editorial character essentially associated with the latter was thenceforth regarded as but a part of the system of mystification which had distinguished the Magazine from the beginning. But it was true, nevertheless, that the reins of practical government were throughout in the hands of the strong-minded and sagacious publisher. It lay with him to insert or reject, to alter or keep back; and though of course at all times open to the advice and influence of his chief contributors, his was no merely nominal management, as even they were sometimes made to experience.

The relation between him and my father, considering the character of the two men, was not a little remarkable, and it did equal credit to both. Wilson's allegiance to the Magazine was steady and undivided. He could not have laboured for it more faithfully had it been his own property.[1] This itself would suffice to prove high qualities in the man who owned it. Mere self-interest

[1] "Of all the writers in it (the Magazine), I have done *most* for the *least* remuneration, though Mr. B. and I have never once had one word of disagreement on that subject."—MS. letter of Wilson, dated 1833.

does not bind men in such perfect mutual consideration and confidence as subsisted between them throughout their lives. It required on both sides true manliness and generosity, combined with tact and forbearance, and every kind feeling that man can show to man. Blackwood's belief in Wilson was unbounded, not simply from admiration of his great powers, but because he knew that he could rely on him to the utmost, both as a contributor and a friend. Wilson's respect and affection for Mr. Blackwood were equally sincere and well founded; and when he followed him to the grave, he felt that no truer friend remained behind. It is pleasant to be able to say that these relations of mutual esteem and confidence were continued uninterrupted after the Magazine came into the hands of Mr. Blackwood's sons, who were able to appreciate the genius and the labour that had done so much to make their own and their father's name famous throughout the world.

In the miscellaneous correspondence that follows, extending over many years, the reader will gather an idea of my father's varied relations, and of the general tenor of his life; but before passing from the subject at present, mention may here be made of the publication in 1822 of a volume of his prose compositions, under the title of "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life, a selection from the papers of the late Arthur Austin." Some of these had appeared in *Blackwood* under the signature "Eremus," which will also be found affixed to several poems in the very early numbers of the Magazine. These beautiful tales have acquired a popularity of the most enduring kind. They

are, indeed, poems in prose, in which, amid fanciful scenes and characters, the struggles of humanity are depicted with pathetic fidelity, and the noblest lessons of virtue and religion are interwoven, in no imaginary harmony, with the homely realities of Scottish peasant life.

The emoluments of his new position, combined with his literary earnings, enabled him, after a few years, to remove from his house in Ann Street to a more commodious residence at no great distance. He was also in a position once more to take up his summer quarters in his beautiful villa at Elleray, the place which he loved above all others on earth; and in the summer of 1823 we find him there, with his wife and children, again under the old roof-tree. After the labours of the College session, and so long a separation from a spot so dear to him, it was not unnatural that he should crave some relaxation from work; and in spite of his publisher's desire to hear from him, the study for a time was deserted for the fields. He was in the habit of sauntering the whole day long among the woods and walks of Elleray. This delightful time, however, had its interruptions. The indefatigable publisher writes letter after letter, reminding him that the Magazine and its readers must be fed. Mr. Blackwood's letters discover the shrewd and practical man of business, temperate in judgment, and reasonable, though a little too much inclined sometimes to the use of strong epithets—a habit too common with literary men of that day, but now fortunately out of fashion. From these letters may be gathered the true relation of Wilson to *Blackwood's Magazine*. On the 15th of May he says:—

"My dear Sir,—For nearly a week I have either been myself, or had one of my sons waiting the arrival of the Carlisle mail, as I never doubted but that you would give me your best help this month. It never was of so much consequence to me, and I still hope that a parcel is on the way.

"That I may be able to wait till the last moment for anything of yours, I am keeping the Magazine back, and have resolved to let it take its chance of arrival by not sending it off till the 28th, when it will go by the steamboat; this will just allow it time to be delivered on the 31st, and if no accident occur, it will be in time.

"I wrote you on the 3d with Waugh's Review, and a few other things. I wrote you again with the periodicals on the 6th. Both parcels were directed according to your letter, to be forwarded by Ambleside coach by Mr. —— or Mr. Jackson. I hope you have received them and the former parcel.

"*Quentin Durward* is to be out on Tuesday, when I will send it to you. Reginald[1] is not quite finished, but will be all at press in a day or two. Mr. Lockhart has done Barry Cornwall[2] and Tim's[3] Viscount Soligny in good style. My not hearing from you, however, discourages him, and I fear much this number will not be at all what I so confidently expected it would have been.

[1] *Reginald Dalton.* By Mr. Lockhart.

[2] *The Flood of Thessaly, The Girl of Provence, and other Poems.* By Barry Cornwall. 8vo.

[3] A *soubriquet* for Mr. Patmore, the reputed author of *Letters on England.* By Victor Count de Soligny. 2 vols. 1823; and *My Friends and Acquaintances.* 3 vols. 1854.

"I shall be happy to hear that you are all well again. —I am, my dear Sir, yours truly,

"W. BLACKWOOD."

About this time Mr. Leigh Hunt was advised to threaten legal proceedings against the London publisher of the Magazine, Mr. Cadell, who appears to have been greatly alarmed by this prospect, not having been quite so accustomed to that species of intimation as Mr. Blackwood. He accordingly wrote to Edinburgh, giving a very grave and circumstantial account of the visit he had received from Mr. Hunt's solicitor. Mr. Blackwood and his contributors took the matter much more coolly, as may be seen from the following letter from Mr. Lockhart, whose concluding advice is eminently characteristic. Indeed, all Mr. Lockhart's letters to my father, as will be seen, are marked by the satirical power of the man—piquant, racy, gossiping, clever, and often affectionate and sincere :—

"EDINBURGH, *Friday, June* 1823.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—Blackwood sends you by this post a copy of the second letter from Cadell, so that you know, ere you read this, as much of the matter as I do.

"I own that it appears to me impossible *we* should at this time of day suffer it to be said that any man who wishes in a gentlemanly way to have our names should not have them. I own that I would rather suffer anything than have a Cockney crow in that sort. But still there is no occasion for rashness, and I do *not* believe

Hunt had that sort of view; at all events, he has not acted as if he had.

"My feeling is that in the next number of the Magazine there should be a note to this effect:—'A certain London publisher has been making some vague and unintelligible inquiries at the shop of our London publisher. If he really wishes to communicate with the author of the article which has offended him, let him not come double-distilled through the medium of booksellers, but write at once to the author of the article in question (he may call him N. B. for the present), under cover to Mr. Blackwood, 17, Princes Street, Edinburgh. He will then have his answer.'

"Whether such a notification as this should or not be sent previously I doubt—but incline to the negative; at all events, the granting of it will save our credit; and as for Hunt, how stands the matter? *First*, Suppose he wishes to bring an action against the author; against you *he* has *no* action, and that he knows; but you would probably give him no opportunity of bringing one; at least, poor as I am, I know I would rather pay anything than be placarded as the defendant in such an action. *2dly*, Suppose he wishes to challenge the author. He cannot send a message to *you*, having printed the last number of the *Liberal*.[1] Therefore, either way, the affair *must* come to nought; I mean as to anything serious.

"Blackwood is going to London next week, and will

[1] The number of the *Liberal*, I presume, containing an article on the Scottish character, in which the Blackwood writers are compared to "a troop of Yahoos, or a tribe of satyrs."

probably visit you on the way, when you and he can talk over this fully; but ere then I confess I should like to have your consent to print such a note as I have mentioned. I cannot endure the notion of these poltroons crowing over us; and being satisfied that no serious consequences *can* result, I do think the thing ought to be done. Read Cadell's letter, and think of it, and write me.

"Above all, for God's sake, be you well and hearty! Who the devil cares for Cockneydom? Write a good article, and take a couple of tumblers.—Yours, affly,

"J. G. L.

"*P.S.—Reginald Dalton*[1] is doing very well. The London subscription was 831, which Ebony thought great for a three-volume affair. In a new magazine (Knight's) set up by the 'Etonians,' there is an article on *Lights and Shadows, Adam Blair*, etc., in which you are lauded tolerably, and but tolerably, and the poor Scorpion still more scurvily treated. It is their opening article and their best. The choice exhibits weakness and conscious weakness. No other news. *Rich and Poor*[2] is a clever book, but very methodistical. I have read about half of it. I will write you a long letter, if you will write me anything at all."

A fragment of a letter from Mr. Lockhart, written about the same time, contains, like all his effusions,

[1] *Reginald Dalton* and *Adam Blair* were anonymous novels written by Mr. Lockhart.

[2] *Rich and Poor*, and *Common Events*, a continuation of the former, anonymous novels, which were ascribed to Miss Annie Walker.

something racy and characteristic. His expressions of interest with regard to Mrs. Wilson's health are more than friendly. The first few lines of this fragment refer to a paper in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July 1823, "On the Gormandizing School of Eloquence," "No. I. Mr. D. Abercromby." In such scraps as this we find the salt which flavoured his letters, and without which he could not have written :—

"Who is Mr. D. Abercromby? You have little sympathy for a brother glutton. What would you think of the Gormandizing School, No. II. 'Professor John Wilson?' I could easily toss off such an article if you are anxious for it,—taking one of the *dilettante* dinners, perhaps, and a speech about Michael Angelo by David Bridges,[1] for the materials. No. III. 'Peter Robertson;' No. IV. 'Wull.' Miss Edgeworth is at Abbotsford, and has been for some time;[2] a little, dark, bearded, sharp, withered, active, laughing, talking, impudent, fearless, outspoken, honest, Whiggish, unchristian, good-tempered, kindly, ultra-Irish body. I like her one day, and damn her to perdition the next. She is a very queer character; particulars some other time. She, Sir Adam,[3] and the Great Unknown, are 'too much

[1] Mr. David Bridges, dubbed by the Blackwood wits, "Director-General of the Fine Arts." For a description of his shop, which was much resorted to by artists, see *Peter's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 230.

[2] Miss Edgeworth's visit was in August 1823. "Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there; never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway, and exclaimed, 'Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream.'"—*Scott's Life*.

[3] Sir Adam Fergusson, the school-fellow of Scott, died on Christmas day 1854. Mr. Chambers remarks, in a biographical sketch of the good old

for any company.' Tom Purdie is well, and sends his compts.;[1] so does Laidlaw.[2] I have invited Hogg to dine here to-morrow, to meet Miss Edgeworth. She has a great anxiety to see the Bore.

"If you answer this letter, I shall write you a whole budget of news next week; if not, I hope to see you

knight, published shortly after his death, that "many interesting and pleasant memories hovered around the name of this fine old man, and in his removal from the world one important link between the Old and the New is severed. It will be almost startling to our readers to hear that there lived so lately one who could say he had sat on the knee of David Hume." He was about a year older than Sir Walter.

[1] Scott's faithful servant, and affectionately devoted, humble friend, from the time that Tom was brought before Sir Walter in his capacity as Sheriff, on a charge of poaching, and promoted into his service, till his death, which took place in 1829. A full account of his peculiarities will be found in Lockhart's *Life of Scott.*

[2] William, or, as he was always called, Willie Laidlaw, was the factor and friend of Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, and latterly his amanuensis; and in this case "the manly kindness and consideration of one noble nature was paralleled by the affectionate devotion and admiration of another." His family still retains as sacred the pens with which *he* wrote *Ivanhoe* to his master's dictation; and he used to tell that at the most intense parts of the story, when Scott happened to pause, which he very seldom did, running off, as he said, "like lintseed oot o' a pock," Laidlaw eagerly asked, "What next?" "Ay, Willie man, what next! that's the deevil o't!" so possessed with the reality of the tale was the busy penman. It is a curious subject how much and how little an author such as Scott can control his own creatures. If they live and move, they possess him often as much as he them. That "shaping spirit" within him is by turns master and slave. Some one asked the consummate author of *Esmond*, "Why did you let Esmond marry his mother-in-law?" "I! it wasn't I; they did it themselves."

Of his *Lucy's Flitting*, my father said, "'Tis one of the sweetest things in the world: not a few staves of his have I sung in the old days when we used to wash our faces in the Douglas Burn, and you, James, were the herd in the hill. Oh me! those sweet, sweet days o' langsyne, Jamie. Here's Willie Laidlaw's health, gentlemen!"—*Noctes.*

Mr. Laidlaw died in 1845.

and Mrs. Wilson in good health next 12th of November, till when I shall remain your silent and affectionate brother-glutton, J. G. LOCKHART.

"*N.B.*—Hodge-podge is in glory; also Fish. Potatoes damp and small. Mushrooms begin to look up. Limes abundant. Weather just enough to make cold punch agreeable. Miss Edgeworth says Peter Robertson is a man of *genius*, and if on the stage, would *be a second Liston*. How are the Misses Watson? Give my love to Miss Charlotte when you see her; and do let me know what passed between you and the Stamp-Master,[1] the Opium-Eater, etc. etc. LL.D. Southey is, I suppose, out of your beat."

The remaining portion of this season spent at Elleray contributed (as appears by allusions in the following letters) not a small share of its occupations to the satisfaction and gratitude of Mr. Blackwood :—

"EDINBURGH, *September* 6, 1823.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I hope you would receive the coach parcel yesterday or to-day, and I expect I shall have the pleasure of receiving a packet from you by Monday or Tuesday. Being so anxious to make this a very strong number, I have put nothing up yet till I see what you and Mr. Lockhart send me. He is to send me something on Monday, and if I receive Hayley[1] in time, I intend to begin the Number with it. I have time enough yet, as this is only the 6th, but in the

[1] Wordsworth.

[2] A review of Hayley's *Memoirs*, Art. X. September 1823.

beginning of the week I must be getting on. I rely so confidently upon you doing all that you can, that I feel quite at ease, at least as much as ever I can be till I see the last forme fairly made up. I have not received the continuation of your brother's article; Mr. Robert promised to write him as he is still in the West. Dr. Mylne told me to-day that he had met him a few days ago at Lord John Campbell's, and that he was pretty well.

"Your friend, Mr. Lowndes from Paisley, was inquiring for you here to-day. I had a letter this morning from Mr. Blair, in which he apologizes for not having fulfilled his engagement, and says, 'It has not been neglect of your claims, to which I have devoted both time and labour, but a complete want of success in everything I have attempted. I should have written you some apology, but that I had always hopes of completing something before another month, and the only reason I had for sending nothing, seemed almost too absurd to write. I know nothing else I can say till I have something else than excuses to send. I am at this moment engaged on an essay on a question of language, which I shall be glad if I can send for your number now going on, and I have been making remarks on "Hunter's Captivity among the Indians," with the intention of reviewing it, which I shall go on with if I hear nothing from you to the contrary.'

"He gives me no address, but merely dates his letter Dudley. Perhaps you will write him, and tell him not to be over-fastidious, and point out to him something he should do. I have sent Mr. L[ockhart] to-day

Alaric's[1] paper, in which there is a grand puff of 'Maga;' he will forward it to you.

"Maginn writes me in high glee about this number, and says he will send something. I hope I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you very soon, and I am, my dear sir, yours very truly, W. BLACKWOOD."

"*Saturday Morning, September* 20, 1823.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Before coming home last night I got all to press, so that I will be able to send you a complete copy of the Number with this, by the mail to-day. You will, I hope, find it a very good one, and though not equal in some respects to No. 79, it is superior in some others. On Wednesday morning I did not expect to have got this length, nor to have had it such a number. By some mistake I did not get back from Mr. L[ockhart] till Wednesday afternoon the slips of O'Doherty on Don Juan and Timothy Tickler. Not hearing from you or him on Tuesday morning, I made up Doubleday's 'Picturesque'[2] with Crewe's 'Blunt,'[3] and 'Bartlemy Fair,' by a new correspondent, whom I shall tell you about before I have done; and not knowing how I might be able to make up the Number, I put in Mr. St. Barbe's 'Gallery,'[4] and 'The poor Man-of-War's Man,' both of which had been in types for three or four months. There being no time to lose, I got these four formes to press; I wish now I

[1] Alaric A. Watts, then editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*.

[2] Art. 1 in the Number.

[3] Art. 2, a review of Blunt's *Vestiges of Ancient Manners*, etc.

[4] Art. 4, 'Time's Whispering Gallery.'

had waited another day, and kept 'The Man-of-War's Man,' but still I hope it will pass muster, and I hope you will read it without prejudice. You will naturally be saying, Why did I not, when run in such difficulty, make up and put to press your articles on ——, and the Murderers? Here I am afraid you will blame me, but first hear me. When I first read your terrible scraping of—— I enjoyed it excessively, but on seeing it in types, I began to feel a little for the poor monster, and above all, when I considered that it might perhaps so irritate the creature as to drive him to some beastly personal attack upon you, I thought it better to pause. I felt quite sure that if published in its present state, he would be in such a state of rage, he would at all events denounce you everywhere as the author. This would be most unpleasant to your feelings, for now that one can look at the article coolly, there are such coarseness and personal things in it as one would not like to hear it said that you were the author of. There was no time for me to write you with a slip, and I sent it to Mr. ——, begging him to consider it, and write me if he thought he could venture to make any alterations. I did not get his packet till Wednesday, and he then wrote that he could not be art or part in the murder of his own dedicator. In these circumstances, I thought it safest to let the article be for next number, that you might correct it yourself. I hope you will think I have done right, and I would anxiously entreat of you to read the article as if it were written by some other person. Few of the readers of 'Maga' know —— and weak

minds would be startled by some of your strong expressions.[1] It was chiefly on account of the length of the extracts that I delayed the 'Murderers,' as the extracts from *Don Juan* and *Cobbett* are so very long. The extracts in your article will make eight or nine pages. They are not set up, but I have got them all correctly copied out, and I return you the book. I am not very sure, however, if these horrid details are the kind of reading that the general readers of 'Maga' would like to have. Curious and singular they certainly are; but then the number lies on the drawing-room table, and goes into the hands of females and young people, who might be shocked by such terrible atrocities, but you will judge of this yourself.[1] Before I received Mr. L.'s MS., I had also made up a very singular story of a suicide, which I received from London, from a person who merely signs himself 'Titus.' O'Doherty's note is by Mr. L. I also wished him to try to make some little alterations in the article, and perhaps add a C.N. note. He had not time, however, to do either the one or the other. Write me what you think of the article, as I fear it will be apt to startle weak minds. However, there is so much talent in it, that I think it will be liked, but not having more I delayed it. 'London Oddities' is by Mr. Croly. 'Timothy, No. 9' by Dr. Maginn. 'No. 10' by Mr. L. 'Andrew Ardent,' by Stark, and the Answer by Mr. C. Never was anything better than your 'General Question,' though there are some strong things in it, which you had written in a

[1] These good advices were not lost on the writer.

[2] The "Murderers" did not appear.

real savage humour, and which will make certain good folks stare. The 'Director-General' and the 'Prize Dissertation' are capital bits. 'Heaven and Hell' no one could have done but yourself. After getting all these made up, I found I had got ten pages beyond my quantity; and as I could not leave out the small letter this month, I had no room for your articles on 'Tennant' and 'Martin.' I enclose the slips of 'Tennant,' but I have not got 'Martin' set up yet. When you noticed Galt's 'Ringan Gilhaize,' you would recollect, I daresay, Doubleday's 'Tragedy.' I wish much you could give half an hour to it, which would suffice. He has not said much; but in two or three of his letters he has inquired, in his quiet way, if we were not going to have some notice of his Tragedy in 'Maga.' As you probably have not a copy with you, I enclose one, in case you should be tempted to take it up. By the by, the Old Driveller is actually doing an article on 'Ringan Gilhaize.' I have seen him several times lately, and a few days ago, when he stopped half an hour in his carriage at the door, he told me he would give me his remarks on it very soon. I am truly thankful he has not thought of laying his pluckless paws on 'Reginald Dalton.' There really ought to be a splendid article on Reginald. I shall be very anxious till I hear from you, how you like this number.

"W. BLACKWOOD."

"EDINBURGH, *October* 18, 1823.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This has been a busy and a happy week with me. Every night almost have I been re-

ceiving packets from you, and yesterday's post brought me the manifesto, which, you will see, closes so gloriously this glorious number.

"It is indeed a number worthy of the ever-memorable month of October. Though I have given twelve pages extra, besides keeping out the lists, I am obliged to keep 'Wrestliana' for next month.

"I have been terribly hurried to get all to press, but I hope you will find your articles pretty correct. I took every pains I could.

"I hope you will write me so soon as you have run through the number, and tell me how you like it. There is so much of your own that your task will be the easier. 'Tennant' is a delightful article, and will make the little man a foot higher. Hogg is beyond all praise, and he will be a most unreasonable porker if he attempt to raise his bristles in any manner of way. I prefixed 'See *Noctes Ambrosianæ*,' and wrote Mr. L. to insert a few words more in the *Noctes* with regard to it. He did not, however, think this necessary. Every one will be in raptures with 'Isaac Walton;' and the *Noctes* is buoyant, brilliant, and capital, from beginning to end. Well might you say that the 'Manifesto'[1] was very good. I shall weary till I have a letter from you telling me all about the number, and when you think you will be here.

"I enclose you a copy of a letter I had from Mr. Blair a few days ago, with two articles. The one on Language seems very curious, but it is so interlined

[1] A short article, chiefly addressed to Charles Lamb, on his exaggerated displeasure at a critical observation by Southey.

and corrected, that I must send him a proof of it, and desire him to send me the conclusion, as it would be a pity to divide it. The other article is an account of Raymond Lulli. It is in his sister's handwriting, and is very amusing, but there was not room for it, and it will answer equally well next month.

"I do not know what on the face of the earth to do with the old Driveller's critique on 'Ringan Gilhaize.' Whenever I hear a carriage stop, I am in perfect horrors, for I do not know what to say to him. I sent the MS. to Mr. L., but he returned it to me, and told me I ought to print it as it is, as it would please both author and critic.

"I send it to you in perfect despair, and I would most anxiously entreat of you to read it, and advise me what I should do. It is as wretched a piece of drivelling as ever I read, and I am sure it would neither gratify Galt nor any one else, while it would most certainly injure the Magazine. If you cannot be plagued with doing anything to it, you will at all events return it carefully to me by coach as soon as possible.

"I have at last settled with Hook[1] for *Percy Mallory*. I hope it will do, though it contains not a little Balaam. There are many inquiries about the 'Foresters.' I hope you are going on. It astonishes even me, what you have done for 'Maga' this last week, and if you are fairly begun to the 'Foresters,' Stark will soon be driving on with it.

[1] *Percy Mallory*, 3 vols. 12mo., published in December 1823. It was written by Dr. James Hook, Dean of Worcester, brother of Theodore Hook. He was also author of *Pen Owen*, etc. Born 1773, died 1828.

"I enclose slips of Mr. St. Barbe's article, and an amusing one by Titus. With these and Stark's article, besides several others, I have a great deal already for next number.—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

"W. BLACKWOOD."

We come now to the spring of 1824. In the merry month of May the usual happy party filling "His Majesty's Royal Mail" set out for the Lakes. Travelling in those days was a matter of more serious consideration than now. The journey to Westmoreland was taken as far as Carlisle per coach; the remaining distance was posted. The arrival at Elleray generally took place between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, long after sunlight had left the skies. A number of trivial associations are remembered in connexion with the approach to this beloved place. The opening of the avenue-gate was a sound never to be forgotten. The sudden swing of the carriage at a particular part of the drive, when it came in contact with the low-lying branches of trees (seldom pruned), dripping with a new-fallen shower of rain, would send a whole torrent of drops upon the expectant faces that were peeping out to catch a first glimpse of the house, which, lighted up, stood on its elevation like a beacon to guide travellers in the dark.

This new Elleray was as much indebted to natural position as was the old. Trellised all over, there was no more than the space for windows uncovered by honeysuckle and roses. In a very short time it became as great a favourite as the old cottage; which, had it

been lost sight of altogether, might have been more regretted. A letter from Mr. Blackwood will show what the Professor had in contemplation for this summer's work :—

"EDINBURGH, *6th May* 1824.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I had so much to do yesterday that I had not time to write you; I hope you got all safe to Elleray, and as the weather is so delightful, I expect to hear in a day or two from you that you have fairly begun to the 'Foresters,'[1] and are driving on it and everything else to your heart's content. That you may see what I am doing, I send you what I have made up, and the slips of a long article by Dr. M'Neill,[2] which I received a few days ago. I am not sure if there will be room for it in this number, but we shall see. It is curious and valuable.

"I wish very much you would write a humorous article upon that thin-skinned person Tommy Moore's 'Captain Rock.' This is the way the book should be treated. We have plenty of the serious *matériel* in Mr. R.'s article, and if you would only take up the Captain in your own glorious way, poor Tommy would be fairly dished. As you probably have not the two last numbers of 'Maga' with you, I enclose them with 'Captain Rock.'

"I have not heard from Dr. Maginn yet, which I am quite annoyed at. He proposed himself that he

[1] One of Wilson's tales. It was not published until the following June, 1825.

[2] The Professor's brother-in-law, now Sir John M'Neill, G.C.B.; at that time in Persia.

would send me off regularly every Monday a packet under Croker's cover. W. BLACKWOOD."

The next letter is from Lockhart, and is of varied interest :—

"161, REGENT STREET, *Monday*, 1824.

"DEAR PROFESSOR,—Many thanks for your welcome epistle, which, on returning from Bristol yesterday, I found here with 'Maga,' and a note of Blackwood's. By the way, you will be glad to hear I found poor Christie doing well, both in health and business. I spent three very pleasant days with him. I have seen a host of lions, among others, Hook, Canning, Rogers, Croly, Maginn, Captain Morris[1] (not the Dr.), Botherby, Lady Davy, Lady C. Lamb—**** (I copy these stars from a page in *Adam Blair*), Miss Baillie, old Gifford, Matthews, Irving, Allan Cunningham, Wilkie, Colburn, and Coleridge. The last well worth all the rest, and 500 more

[1] Charles Morris, once the idol of clubmen in London, was born in 1745, and died on July 11, 1838, ninety-three years of age! Mr. Lockhart's parenthetical reference to the Doctor is, of course, to his own *nom de plume* as Dr. Peter Morris of Pensharpe Hall, Aberyswith. The following allusion to the "Captain" is taken from M. Esquiros' *English at Home* :—

"Among the last names connected with the Beef-steak Club figures that of Captain Morris. He was born in 1745, but survived most of the merry guests whom he amused by his gaiety, his rich imagination, and his poetical follies. He was the sun of the table, and composed some of the most popular English ballads. The Nestor of song, he himself compared his muse to the flying-fish. At the present day his Bacchic strains require the clinking of glass, and the joyous echoes of the Club, of which Captain Morris was poet-laureate. Type of the true Londoner, he preferred town to country, and the shady side of Pall Mall to the most brilliant sunshine illuminating nature. Toward the end of his life, however, he let himself be gained over by the charms of the rural life he had ridiculed, and retired to a villa at Brockham given him by the Duke of

such into the bargain. Ebony should merely keep him in his house for a summer, with Johnny Dow[1] in a cupboard, and he would drive the windmills before him. I am to dine at Mr. Gillman's one of these days. Irving,[2] you may depend upon it, is a pure humbug. He has about three good attitudes, and the lower notes of his voice are superb, with a fine manly tremulation that sets women mad as the roar of a noble bull does a field of kine; but beyond this he is nothing, really nothing. He has no sort of real earnestness, feeble, pumped up, boisterous, overlaid stuff is his staple; he is no more a Chalmers than ——[3] is a Jeffrey. I shall do an article that will finish him by and by. * * * Neither Maginn nor any one else has spoken to me about the concerns and prospects of our friend. My belief is, that he has come over by Croker's advice to assist Theodore in *Bull*,[4] and to do all sorts of bye jobs. I also believe that

Norfolk. Before starting, he bade farewell to the Club in verse. He reappeared there as a visitor in 1835, and the members presented him with a large silver bowl bearing an appropriate inscription. Although at that time eighty-nine years of age, he had lost none of his gaiety of heart. He died a short time after, and with him expired the glory of the Club of which he had been one of the last ornaments. Only the name has survived of this celebrated gathering where so much wit was expended, but it was of the sort which evaporates with the steam of dishes and bowls of punch."

[1] An Edinburgh short-hand writer.

[2] Edward Irving, the celebrated preacher, was at this time sailing onwards on the full tide of popularity. Mrs. Oliphant, in her recent biography, writes thus regarding his famous sermon preached during this year to the London Missionary Society: "There can be little doubt that it was foolishness to most of his hearers, and that after the fascination of his eloquence was over, nine-tenths of them would recollect, with utter wonder, or even with possible contempt, that wildest visionary conception."

[3] A well-known Whig lawyer.

[4] The *John Bull* newspaper, edited by Theodore Hook.

Croker thinks he himself will have a place in the Cabinet in case of the Duke of York's being King, and of course M. looks forward to being snugly set somewhere in that event. It is obvious that Hook, Maginn, and all this set hate Canning; and indeed a powerful party of high *ton* (Duke of York at head thereof) *is* forming itself against his over-conciliation system. I am not able to judge well, but I still believe that Canning is the man no Tory Ministry can do without; moreover, that the Marquis of Hertford (the great man with Croker's party, and the destined *Premier* of Frederick I.) has not a character to satisfy the country gentlemen of England. I met Canning at dinner one day at Mr. Charles Ellis's; the Secretary asked very kindly after you, and mentioned that 'he had had the pleasure of making acquaintance with Mr. Blackwood, a very intelligent man indeed.' I am to dine with him on Saturday, when I shall see more of him. He was obviously in a state of exhausted spirits (and strength indeed) when I met him. Rogers told me *he knew* that Jeffrey was mortally annoyed with Hazlitt's article on the periodicals being in the *Edinburgh Review*, and that it was put there by Thomas Thomson and John A. Murray,[1] who were co-editors, while 'the king of men' was in Switzerland.[2] Wordsworth is in town at present, but confined with his eyes. I thought it might appear obtrusive if I called,

[1] Afterwards Lord Murray.

[2] From Mr. Innes's *Memoir of Thomas Thomson*, I see that the editorship of the *Edinburgh Review* was left in his hands more than once. "This foremost of Record scholars, the learned legal antiquarian, and constitutional lawyer" died in 1852, aged eighty-four.

and have stayed away. John Murray seems the old man; the *Quarterly* alone sustains him. Maginn says he makes £4000 per annum off it, after all expenses, and as they really sell 14,000, I can easily credit it. Colburn is making a great fortune by his Library and altogether. I meet no one who ever mentions his magazine but to laugh at it. The No. of Ebony is fair, but not first-rate. Your talk of Murders is exquisite, but otherwise the *Noctes* too local by far. Maginn on Ritter Bann not so good as might be. The article on Matthews (I don't know whose) is just, and excellent criticism. This wedding of James's came on me rather suddenly. Perhaps you will be delayed in Auld Reekie for the sake of witnessing that day's celebration. My own motions are still unfixed, but I suspect I shall linger here too long to think of a land journey or the lakes. More likely to make a run in September, and see you in your glory. De Quincey is not here but expected.—Yours, J. G. L.

"I don't hear anything of *Matthew Wald* here, but I would fain hope it may be doing in spite of that. Ask Blackwood to let me hear anything. Can I do anything for him here? I am picking up materials for the Baron Lauerwinkel's or some other body's letters to his kinsfolk, 3 vols. post 8vo. Pray write a first-rate but *brief* puff of *Matthew* for next number *Blackwood*, or if not, say so, that I may do it myself, or make the Doctor.[1] I shall write B—— one of these days if any-

[1] *The History of Matthew Wald*, a novel by Mr. Lockhart. It was reviewed in the May number of *Blackwood*.

thing occurs, and at any rate he shall have a letter to C. N. speedily, from Timothy, on the *Quarterly* or *Westminster* Reviews. A *Noctes* from me positively."

Passing over the various other topics touched on in this letter, how strangely do these words about "Frederick I." now sound upon the ear! How little did the sagacious foresight of politicians calculate that every day an invisible hand was preparing the crown for a little child of five years of age, and that in the short space of eighteen years, no fewer than five heirs of the royal line should pass away, leaving a clear and uninterrupted passage for the Princess Victoria to the throne of these realms!

The next letter is equally characteristic :—

"ABBOTSFORD, *Sunday, 2d January* 1825.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I left London on Wednesday evening, and arrived here in safety within forty-six hours of the 'Bull and Mouth.'

"Our friend the Bailie[1] might probably show you a letter of Dr. Stoddart[2] about getting some *literary* articles for the *New Times*. I saw Old Slop, and introduced Maginn to him. What the Doctor and he might afterwards agree about I can't say, but I do hope there may be a permanent connexion between them, as among

[1] Mr. Blackwood.

[2] Sir John Stoddart (at this time editor of *The New Times*, a morning paper, which was started about 1817 and continued until 1828) was born in 1773, and died in 1856. Besides his political writings, he was the author of *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland in* 1799 *and* 1800. 2 vols. 1801; *An Essay on the Philosophy of Language;* and some translations. In the political caricatures and satires of that day, he was continually introduced as "Dr. Slop."

newspeople there is no doubt Stoddart is by far the most respectable man, and there is every reason to fear M.'s propensities tending more frequently to the inferior orders of the *Plume*.

"For myself, I accepted Dr. Stoddart's offer of his newspaper, to be repaid by a few occasional paragraphs throughout the year; and upon his earnest entreaty for some introduction to you, I ventured to say that I thought you would have no objection to receive the *New Times* on the same terms.

"Whether he has at once acted on this hint I know not, but thought it best to write you *in case*.

"After all, it is a pleasant thing to have a daily paper at one's breakfast-table all the year through.

"It can cost us little trouble to repay him by a dozen half-columns—half of these may be puffs of ourselves by the way—and Southey and others have agreed to do the same thing on the same terms. So if the *New Times* comes, and you don't wish it upon these terms, pray let me know this, that I may advise Slop.

"London is deserted by the gentlefolks in the Christmas holidays, so that I have little news. I placed my brother, quite to my satisfaction and his, at Blackheath. As for the matter personal to myself, of which I spoke to you, I can only say that I left it in Croker's hands; he promising to exert himself to the utmost whenever the high and mighty with whom the decision rests should come back to London. I think, upon the whole, that there is nothing to be gained or denied except Lord Melville's personal voice; and it will certainly be very odd if, everything else being got over, he in this

personal and direct manner shows himself not indifferent, but positively adverse. I entertain, therefore, considerable hope, and if I fail shall be not disappointed certainly, but d—d angry.

"I shall be in Edinburgh, I think, on Thursday evening, when I hope to find you and yours as well in health, and better in other respects, than when I left you. May this year be happier than the last!—Yours always, J. G. LOCKHART."

A letter from Mr. De Quincey, after a long silence, again brings him before us, as graceful and interesting as ever, though also, alas! as heavily beset with his inevitable load of troubles. His letter is simply dated "London;" for obvious reasons that great world was a safer seclusion than even the Vale of Grasmere:—

"LONDON, *Thursday, February* 24, 1825.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I write to you on the following occasion:—Some time ago, perhaps nearly two years ago, Mr. Hill, a lawyer, published a book on Education,[1] detailing a plan on which his brothers had established a school at Hazelwood, in Warwickshire. This book I reviewed in the *London Magazine*, and in consequence received a letter of thanks from the author, who, on my coming to London about midsummer last year, called on me. I have since become intimate with him, and excepting that he is a sad Jacobin (as I am obliged to tell him once or twice a month), I have no one fault to

[1] The work referred to here is, "Plans for the Government and Liberal Instruction of Boys in large numbers, drawn from Experience." 8vo. London. 1823.

find with him, for he is a very clever, amiable, good creature as ever existed; and in particular directions his abilities strike me as really very great indeed. Well, his book has just been reviewed in the last *Edinburgh Review* (of which some copies have been in town about a week). This service has been done him, I suppose, *through* some of his political friends—(for he is connected with Brougham, Lord Lansdowne, old Bentham, etc.)—but I understand *by* Mr. Jeffrey. Now Hill, in common with multitudes in this Babylon—who will not put their trust in Blackwood as in God (which, you know, he ought to do), yet privately adores him as the devil; and indeed publicly too, is a great *proneur* of Blackwood. For, in spite of his Jacobinism, he is liberal and inevitably just to real wit. His fear is—that Blackwood may come as Nemesis, and compel him to regorge any puffing and cramming which Tiff has put into his pocket, and is earnest to have a letter addressed in an influential quarter to prevent this. I alleged to him that I am not quite sure but it is an affront to a Professor, to presume that he has any connexion as contributor or anything else, to any work which he does not publicly avow as his organ for communicating with the world of letters. He answers that it would be so in him,—but that an old friend may write *sub rosâ*. I rejoin that I know not but you may have cut Blackwood—even as a subscriber—a whole lustrum ago. He rebuts—by urging a just compliment paid to you as a supposed contributor, in the *News of Literature and Fashion*, but a moon or two ago.—Seriously, I have told him that I know not what was the extent

of your connexion with Blackwood at *any* time; and that I conceive the labours of your Chair in the University must now leave you little leisure for any but occasional contributions, and therefore for no regular cognizance of the work as director, etc. However, as all that he wishes—is simply an interference to save him from any very severe article, and not an article in his favour, I have ventured to ask of you if you hear of any such thing, to use such influence as must naturally belong to you in your general character (whether maintaining any connexion with Blackwood or not), to get it softened. On the whole, I suppose no such article is likely to appear. But to oblige Hill I make the application. He has no *direct* interest in the prosperity of Hazelwood: he is himself a barrister in considerable practice, and of some standing, I believe: but he takes a strong paternal interest in it, all his brothers (who are accomplished young men, I believe) being engaged in it. They have already had one shock to stand: a certain Mr. Place, a Jacobin friend of the school till just now, having taken pet with it—and removed his sons. Now this Place, who was formerly a tailor—leather-breeches maker—and habit-maker—having made a fortune and finished his studies,—is become an immense authority as a political and reforming head with Bentham, etc., as also with the *Westminster Review*, in which quarter he is supposed to have the weight of nine times nine men; whence, by the way, in the 'circles' of the booksellers, the Review has got the name of the *Breeches Review*.

"Thus much concerning the occasion of my letter.

As to myself,—though I have written not as one who labours under much depression of mind,—the fact is, I *do* so. At this time calamity presses upon me with a heavy hand:—I am quite free of opium:[1] but it has left the liver, which is the Achilles' heel of almost every human fabric, subject to affections which are tremendous for the weight of wretchedness attached to them. To fence with these with the one hand, and with the other to maintain the war with the wretched business of hack author, with all its horrible degradations,—is more than I am able to bear. At this moment I have not a place to hide my head in. Something I meditate—I know not what—'Itaque e conspectu omnium abiit.' With a good publisher and leisure to premeditate what I write, I might yet liberate myself: after which, having paid everybody, I would slink into some dark corner—educate my children—and show my face in the world no more.

"If you should ever have occasion to write to me, it will be best to address your letter either 'to the care of Mrs. De Quincey, Rydal Nab, Westmoreland' (Fox Ghyll is sold, and will be given up in a few days), or 'to the care of M. D. Hill, Esq., 11, King's Bench Walk, Temple:'—but for the present, I think rather to the latter: for else suspicions will arise that I am in Westmoreland, which, if I were not, might be serviceable to me; but if, as I am in hopes of accomplishing sooner or later, I should be—might defeat my purpose.

"I beg my kind regards to Mrs. Wilson and my

[1] To the very last he asserted this, but the habit, although modified, was never abandoned.

young friends, whom I remember with so much interest as I last saw them at Elleray,—and am, my dear Wilson, very affectionately yours,

"THOMAS DE QUINCEY."

In the following letter from my father to his friend, Mr. Findlay of Easter Hill, he refers to the death of his venerable mother, which took place in December 1824. The accident to my mother, to which allusion is made, occurred in the previous summer; he was driving with her and the children one day in the neighbourhood of Ambleside, when the axle-tree gave way, and the carriage was overturned while ascending a steep hill. No very bad consequences to any of the party ensued at the time. Mrs. Wilson, however, felt the shock to her nervous system, which affected her health so as to cause her husband much anxiety.

"29, ANN STREET, *March* 2, 1825.

"MY DEAREST ROBERT,—Much did I regret not being at home when you called upon us lately. Both Mrs. Wilson and myself felt sincerely for your wife and yourself on your late affliction. I had heard from Miss Sym that there were few hopes, but also that the poor soul was comfortable and happy, and now no doubt she is in heaven.

"I am sure that you too would feel for all of us when you heard of my mother's death; she was, you know, one of the best of women, and although old, seventy-two, yet in all things so young that we never feared to lose her till within a few days of her departure; she led a happy and a useful life, and now

must be enjoying her reward. I have suffered great anxiety about Mrs. Wilson; that accident[1] was a bad one, and during summer she was most alarmingly ill. She is still very weak, and her constitution has got a shake, but I trust in God it is not such as may not be got over, and that the summer will restore her to her former health. She looks well, but is not so, and many a wretched and sleepless hour do I pass on her account.

[1] The following letter from Principal Baird alludes to the same accident:—

"UNIVERSITY CHAMBERS, *July* 23*d*, 1824.

"MY DEAR SIR,—In the first place, to begin methodically, I beg to congratulate you on the hair-breadth escape which the newspapers told us you so happily made when your horse was restive and your gig on the brink of a precipice; and, in the second place, I beg to remind you that the best expression of your gratitude for the deliverance, will be to—to compose some paraphrases and translations for the use of the Church. I shall be glad to learn, and to see proof that you are thus employed.

"I have got several excellent pieces from Mrs. Hemans and Mrs. Grant of Laggan lately, in addition to those which I had formerly from Miss Joanna Baillie, etc.

"I am at present busy in the transmission of papers through the Church in respect to the General Assembly's plan for increasing the means of education, of religious instruction chiefly, in the Highlands and Islands. In three contiguous parishes there is a population of about 20,000, and above 18,000 of these poor people have never been taught to read. In another district about 47,000 out of 50,000 have not been taught. Ought these things so to be?

"I am particularly interested in the state of Iona. Ill supplied with a single school, it has no place of worship. The minister is bound to preach to them only four times in the year. He preaches on a hill-side, and from that neighbouring coast of the mainland; he has an audience on that hill-side of never less than 1000 persons. This is the state of Iona, from which came at a remote day to our mainland the light of literature and religion. I wish you would write a petition by Iona for consideration and help. St. Kilda's privations have been supplied by public sympathy and bounty. Let us not neglect Iona, amid the 'ruins of which whose plaids would not grow warmer?'—I am, with great regard, yours most faithfully,

"GEORGE BAIRD."

"It is so long since the meeting of the good old Professor's[1] friends, that I need now say no more than that all the arrangements met with my most complete approbation, that I read the account with peculiar pleasure, and especially your speech and Dr. Macgill's. Whatever was in your hands could not be otherwise than proper and right. I have been much worried with my own affairs, —— having entangled me in much mischief, even after he had ruined me, but I am perfectly reconciled to such things, and while my wife and family are well and happy, so will I be. Could I see Jane perfectly restored, I should dismiss all other anxieties from my mind entirely.

"I should like much indeed to see you at Easter Hill for a day or two; my plans are yet all unfixed. Perhaps I may take a walk as far early in May.

"I am building a house in Gloucester Place, a small street leading from the Circus into Lord Moray's grounds. This I am doing because I am poor, and money yielding no interest. If Jane is better next winter, I intend to carry my plan into effect of taking into my house two or three young gentlemen. Mention this in any quarter. Remember me kindly to your excellent wife. Your family is now most anti-Malthusian.—Believe me ever, my dearest Robert, your most affectionate friend, JOHN WILSON."

The house in Gloucester Place was completed and ready for habitation in 1826, and thenceforth was his home during the remainder of his life. The plan of

[1] Professor Jardine.

receiving young gentlemen into his house was never put into execution.

About this time a proposal was made that a separate Chair of Political Economy should be instituted in the University of Edinburgh, and that the appointment should be conferred upon Mr. J. R. M'Culloch, then editor of the *Scotsman* newspaper. Wilson's professorship combined the two subjects of Moral Philosophy *and* Political Economy, but up to this period he had not lectured on the latter topic: he therefore resented the movement as an interference with his vested rights, and by appealing to Government succeeded in crushing the project. After this controversy (which included a sharp pamphlet, in which the Professor, under the *nom de plume* of Mordecai Mullion, dealt somewhat freely with Mr. M'Culloch), he lectured on political economy. Two years later, we find that he was an advocate of free trade, as may be seen from his letter to Dr. Moir in the next chapter. Could his new studies—consequent upon complying with his friend Patrick Robertson's advice to prepare a course of lectures on political economy—have led to this result? It is more than probable that De Quincey may also have influenced his opinions on this head.

The following letters, from Mr. Patrick Robertson, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Peel, will show the interest taken by Wilson's personal and political friends as to the proposed Chair:—

"EDINBURGH, *Tuesday*, 14*th June* 1825.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I have your last. Lockhart and Hope concur with me in thinking that the idea of

a petition is out of the question. It would not do to enter the field in this way, unless victory were perilled on the success; and what will be the lethargy of our leading Tories and the activity of the Whigs? I should fear the result of a contest in this form. You seem to me to have made every possible exertion; and there is only one thing more I must urge upon you, a positive pledge to lecture on this subject *next winter*. You are quite adequate to the task, and this without leaving Elleray. Books can easily be sent; and if you don't know about corn and raw produce, and bullion and foreign supplies, so as to be ready to write in December, you are not the man who went through the more formidable task of your first course. A pledge of this kind would be useful, and when redeemed (if the storm were now over), would be a complete bar against future invasions of your rights. Think of this, or rather determine to do this without thinking of it, and it is done.

"I don't see why you should leave your charming cottage to come down here at present, nor how you can be of any further service than you have been. It is strange there is no answer from the Big Wigs. Lord Melville writes nobody, and I fancy William Dundas has his hands full enough of his city canvass since that insane ass, ——, started. I am in hopes you will hear soon. Both Hope and Robert Dundas are anxious to do all in their power, and expect this plot will be defeated; but I see no way of preventing it ultimately, except your actual lectures on the subject. None of us will come up this year, that you may

have time to study, so study you must; and don't you understand the old principle upon which the whole of this nonsensical science hangs? I assure you, without jest, we all deeply feel the insult thus offered to you and the party, and I cannot believe it will ever be carried through. My hope is in Peel more than all the rest. Oh, for one dash of poor Londonderry!—Ever yours faithfully, PAT. ROBERTSON."

"BOARD OF TRADE, 15*th June* 1825.

"SIR,—I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 8th instant, stating the grounds on which you conceive that the erection of a new professorship in the University of Edinburgh, for the purpose of lecturing on Political Economy, would be an unfair interference with the rights, and consequent duties, which belong to the Chair of Moral Philosophy.

"Without feeling it necessary to go into the question how far the mode of lecturing on political economy which has hitherto prevailed in the University of Edinburgh is the most desirable, and exactly that in which I should concur, if the whole distribution of instruction in that University were to be recast, I have no difficulty in stating that every attention ought to be paid in looking at the present application to the circumstances and consideration which you have stated.

"The state of this case, as far as I know, is this:—An application has been made by memorial, from certain individuals, to the Government, for the sanction of the Crown to establish a professorship of Political Economy in the University, the subscribers offering to provide a

permanent fund for founding the new Chair, in like manner as has been done by a private gentleman (Mr. Drummond) in the University of Oxford.

"This memorial has been referred by Lord Liverpool to the University of Edinburgh for their opinion, and no final decision will be taken by the Government until that opinion shall be received. Should the Senatus Academicus not recommend a compliance with the prayer of the Memorial, I have every reason to believe that it will not receive the sanction of Government, and I have conveyed that impression to the person who had put the memorial into my hands.

"I must therefore refer you, as one of that Senatus Academicus, to your colleagues, who will, I have no doubt, give that opinion which shall appear to them most conducive to the furtherance of the important duties of the University, without prejudice to the individual right of any member of that learned body.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient Servant,

"W. HUSKISSON."

FROM MR. CANNING.

"FOREIGN OFFICE, *June* 21, 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—The alarm under which your letter of the 8th was written, has, I think, subsided long ago, in consequence of the answers which your representations received from other quarters. I only write lest you should think that I had neglected your letter, or felt no interest in your concerns.—I am, dear Sir, your obedient and faithful servant, GEO. CANNING.

"MR. PROFESSOR WILSON."

FROM SIR ROBERT PEEL.

[*Private.*] "WHITEHALL, *June* 21, 1825.

"SIR,—The project of establishing a new and separate Professorship of Political Economy in the University of Edinburgh did not receive any encouragement from me. I understand that it is altogether abandoned; and I have only, therefore, to assure you, that before I would have given my assent to it under any circumstances, I should have considered it my duty to ascertain that the institution of a new Chair was absolutely necessary for the purposes for which it professed to be instituted, and that the just privileges of other professors were not affected by it.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, ROBERT PEEL.

"PROFESSOR WILSON, ETC. ETC.,
EDINBURGH."

He did not "leave his charming cottage," but very soon found more interesting work than political enonomy to occupy his thoughts. Mr. Blackwood soon after writes of his "going on with another volume," and also says, "I rejoice, too, that you are preparing your Outlines."[1] Of the "other volume" nothing more was heard. Some small portion of its intended contents was probably contributed to a work presently to be spoken of; but from the letters in reference to that subject, it may be conjectured that some tales were written by him, which, if they ever appeared in print,

[1] In December 1825, I find advertised as "speedily to be published, in one vol. 8vo, *Prospectus of a Course of Moral Inquiry*, by John Wilson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh;" this book, however, never appeared.

are not hitherto identified with his name. Besides the three tales which had already been published, *Lights and Shadows*, *Margaret Lyndsay*, and *The Foresters*, and two volumes of poems, no separate works of his appeared until the *Recreations of Christopher North* in 1843. That he did not carry out his intention of preparing his Outlines is cause of regret.

The next letter from Mr. Lockhart contains some reference to a literary project, of which the first idea appears to have originated with him. The name of *Janus* will doubtless be entirely new to the readers of this generation, and there are not many now living who are aware of the fact that the volume published under that name, in November 1825, was chiefly the composition of Wilson and Lockhart. The fact that the publication was intrusted to any other hands than those of Mr. Blackwood I can only attribute to the fact—apparent, from some allusions in Mr. Lockhart's letters —that he had by this time become rather impatient of Mr. Blackwood's independent style of treating his contributions. But for him the book would never have appeared, and as certainly my father would never have contributed. The plan was suggested apparently by the popularity of a class of books that began to appear in London in the preceding year, under the title of Annuals, such as the *Forget Me Not*, the *Amulet*, and *Friendship's Offering*. They were adorned with engravings, and contained contributions from the pens of distinguished writers. The projectors of *Janus* thought it most prudent to make the success of their Annual depend on its literary merits alone, but it turned out

that they were mistaken. Lockhart and Wilson undertook the editorship, and contributed the great bulk of the articles.[1] The following is a letter from Mr. Lockhart bearing on this subject. He was on the eve of starting for Ireland with Sir Walter Scott:—

"EDINBURGH, *July 8th*—(Starting).

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I am exceedingly sorry to find myself leaving Edinburgh without having seen again or heard from you. I have no time to write at length, so take business in form.

"1*st*, I have seen Dr. Graham and David Ritchie to-day. They both are in spirits about the affair of the P. E.[1] chair. Peel has written to the Principal *most favourably* for you, and they both think the matter is settled. However, it is still possible a Senatus Academicus may be called, in which case you will of course come down.

2*d*, I have seen Boyd. He is in high glee, and has got many subscriptions already for *Janus*. I have settled that I shall, on reaching Chiefswood by the 12th of August, be in condition to keep *Janus* at work regularly, and therefore you must let me have, then and there, a quantity of your best MS. If you think of any engravings, the sooner you communicate with Boyd as to that matter the better, as he will send to London for designs, and grudge no expense; but this is a thing which does require timely notice.

"I confess I regard all that as a very secondary con-

[1] Several letters on the subject have been sent me, through the kindness of John Boyd, Esq., of the firm of Oliver & Boyd, the publishers of *Janus*, which show the interest and zeal with which the work was carried through.

[2] Political Economy.

cern. In the meantime I have plenty of things ready for *Janus;* and the moment I have from you a fine poem or essay, or anything to begin with (for I absolutely demand that you should *lead*), I am ready to see the work go to press.

"I therefore expect, when I reach home, to find there lying for me a copious packet from Elleray.

"3*d*, Constable is about to publish a *Popular Encyclopœdia*, in 4 vols. 8vo, and he has been able to get Scott, Jeffrey, Mackenzie, to contribute. The articles are on *an average* one page and a half each, but each contributor, having undertaken a number of articles, is at liberty to divide the space among *them* as he pleases. I have undertaken a few heraldic and biographical things, and he is very anxious that you should do the same.

"For example, *Locke, Hobbes, Dr. Reid:* Would you take in hand to give him two or three pages each (double columns), condensing the most wanted *popular* information as to these men? If so, he would gladly jump, and I should certainly be much gratified, because I perceive in him the most sincere desire to have connexion literary with your honour.

"Pray address to me, care of Captain Scott, 15th Hussars, Dublin, if you wish to write to me immediately; if not, my motions are so uncertain that you had much better write to Constable himself, or to me when I return. As to the articles, nine of them are wanted *this year.*

"I beg my best respects to Mrs. Wilson, and to all the bairns, greeting.—Yours affectionately,

"J. G. LOCKHART."

About that time there was no small excitement at Elleray in the anticipation of a visit from Sir Walter Scott. Mr. Canning was also in the neighbourhood, and there was a desire to do honour to both by some grand demonstration. On the 17th August, Lockhart writes to Wilson, "On board the steamboat 'Harlequin,' half-way from Dublin to Holyhead:"—

"My dear Wilson,—Here we are, alive and hearty. Sir Walter Scott, Anne Scott, and myself; and I write you at the desire of the worthy Baronet to say, that there has been some sort of negotiation about meeting Mr. Canning at your friend Bolton's. He fears Mr. Canning will be gone ere now, but is resolved still to take Windermere *en route*. We shall, therefore, sleep at Lancaster on Friday night, and breakfast at Kendal, Saturday morning. Sir W. leaves it to you to dispose of him for the rest of that day. You can, if Mr. Canning is at Storrs, let Col. Bolton know the movements of Sir W., and so forth; or you can sport us a dinner yourself; or you can, if there is any inconvenience, order one and beds for us at Admiral Ullock's. We mean to remain over the Sunday to visit you, at any rate; so do about the Saturday as you like. I believe Sir W. expects to call both on Wordsworth and Southey in going northwards; but I suppose if Canning is with you, they are with you also. Canning in his letter to Scott calls you 'Lord High Admiral of the Lakes.'

"I am delighted to find that there is this likelihood of seeing you, and trust Mrs. Wilson is thoroughly restored. I have heard from nobody in Scotland but

my wife, who gives no news but strictly domestic. Perhaps this will not reach you in time to let us find a line at Kendal informing us of your arrangements.—Yours always, J. G. LOCKHART."

Sir Walter, with his daughter, Miss Scott, and Mr. Lockhart, visited Elleray, as was promised, and remained there for three days. Of this meeting Mr. Lockhart writes :—"On the banks of Windermere we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she now is."[1]

All honour was done to the illustrious guest, and my father arranged that he should be entertained by a beautiful aquatic spectacle. It was a scene worthy a royal progress, and resembled some of those rare pageants prepared for the reception of regal brides beneath the dazzling sunshine of southern skies. "There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the lake by moonlight, and the last day 'The Admiral of the Lake' presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession when it paused at the Point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guest. The three Bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and the music and sunshine, flags,

[1] *Life of Scott.*

streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations, as the flotilla wound its way among richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators."[1]

My father invited various friends from Scotland at this gay and notable time, to join in the general welcome given to Scott; among others, he asked his old and esteemed friend the Professor of Natural History, Mr. Jameson,[2] who was reluctantly detained by his duties as editor of *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal:* his letter is of sufficient interest to be given here :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have delayed from day to day answering your kind letter, in expectation of being able to make such arrangements as would allow me the pleasure of visiting you, but in vain; and now I find, from unforeseen circumstances, that I must forego the happiness of a ramble with you this season. My sister, or rather sisters, who were to accompany me, and who beg their best wishes and kindest thanks to you for your polite invitation, wish all printers, and printers' devils, at the bottom of the Red Sea. They have been in a state of semi-insurrection against me for some time, owing to the putting off of the expedition, but are now resigned to their fate.

"Edinburgh is at present very dull, and very stupid, and we are only kept alive by the visits of interesting strangers.

[1] *Life of Scott.*

[2] Professor Jameson died in 1853, *ætat* eighty.

"The adventures of the regatta have reached this, and my sisters expect to hear from Miss Wilson, who, they presume, acted a distinguished part in the naval conflict, an animated account of all that befell the admirals. Some German philosophers say that a man —that I presume does not exclude a professor—may be in many places at the same time. I was rather inclined to doubt the accuracy of this notion, but now it seems to be confirmed in yourself, for, on the *same day*, you were buried at Edinburgh, and alive and merry at Elleray.[1]

"All here join in best wishes to your family and Mrs. Wilson, and believe me to remain yours faithfully and sincerely, ROB. JAMESON.

"My dear Sir, I hope you will not forget your promise of a paper for *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*. The effects of the scenery of a country on

[1] This refers to a practical joke of Mr. Lockhart's, but not known at the time to have originated with him; a joke which might have ended in painful results had it come untimeously to the ears of any one nearly connected with its object. It was no less than a formal announcement of Professor Wilson's sudden death in the leading columns of *The Weekly Journal*, along with a panegyric upon his character, written in the usual style adopted when noting the death of celebrated persons. I have not been able to find the paper, but I believe it was only inserted in a very few copies. On a later occasion Mr. Lockhart amused himself in a similar manner, by appending to a paper on Lord Robertson's poems in *The Quarterly Review*, the following distich:—

"Here lies the peerless paper lord, Lord Peter,
Who broke the laws of God, and man, and metre."

These lines were, however, only in one copy, which was sent to the senator; but the joke lay in Lord Robertson's imagining that it was in the whole edition.

its population would form a very interesting topic, and one which affords an ample field for interesting observation."

Soon after returning to Scotland, Lockhart writes, not in the best of spirits. What the opening allusion is to, I do not know :—

"CHIEFSWOOD, *Wednesday*, 1825.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I have received your letter, and shall not say more in regard to one part of its contents than that I am heartily sensible to your kindness, and shall in all time coming respect most religiously the feelings which I cannot but honour in you as to that matter. I hope I may be as brief in my *words* about Mrs. Wilson. I trust the cool weather, and quiet of a few weeks, will have all the good effects you look forward to, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you all well and gladsome, in spite of all that hath been in the month of November. As for *you*, I do think it is likely we may meet earlier. All I know of Canning's motions is, that Sir W. Scott expects him at Abbottsford very early in October; the day not fixed that I know of. I cannot help thinking that you would be much out of your duty, both to others and to yourself, if you did *not* come down; for there *is* to be at least one public dinner in C.'s offer—I mean from the Pitt Club—and I think he can't refuse. You must come down and show that we have one speaker among us—for *certes* we have but one—unless the President himself should come forth on the occasion, which I take to be rather out of the dice. I know Sir W. also will be particularly gratified in see

ing you come out on such a field-day. I wish you would just put yourself into the mail and come to *me* here when C. leaves Storrs, and then you would see him at Abbotsford, and at Edinburgh also, without trouble of any kind. The little trip would shake your spirits up, and do you service every way. I assure you it would do me a vast deal of good too. I have been far from well either in health or spirits for some time back, and indeed exist merely by dint of forcing myself to do something. I have spent five or six hours on Shakspere regularly, and have found that sort of work of great use to me, it being one that can be grappled with without that full flow of vigour necessary for anything like *writing;* and I wish you had some similar job by you to take up when the spirit is not exactly in its highest status. I heard grand accounts of you the other day from the young Duke of Buccleuch and his governor, Blakeney—a very superior man, by the way. It would make *me* happy indeed to see you here, and I may say the same of not a few round about me.

"I shall not fail to write you again, if I hear anything worth telling as to C.; but I think it more likely you should than I, and I hope you will write *me* if that be the case.

"One word as to Ebony.[1] It is clear he must go down now. Maginn, you have heard, I suppose, is universally considered as the sole man of the *John Bull Magazine;* a most infamous concern, and in gene-

[1] The *soubriquet* by which Mr. Blackwood was known by his contributors.

ral displaying a marvellous lack of everything but the supremest impudence. I foresee sore rubs between Ebony and him. —— is exceedingly insolent when he has nobody near him, as is the case at present—cuts and maims—keeps back, etc. etc.; in short, is utterly disgusting.

"You will have perceived that I have done very little this summer. How could I? I am totally sick of all that sort of concern, and would most gladly say, 'farewell for ever.'—Yours affectionately always,

"J. G. LOCKHART."

It appears that Mr. Canning did not visit Abbotsford, and the anticipated opportunity of showing that there was "one speaker" in Scotland did not therefore occur.

The brilliant and versatile, but somewhat dangerous pen of Maginn,[1] was at this time in full employment

[1] William Maginn, *alias* Ensign O'Doherty, *alias* Luctus, *alias* Dr. Olinthus Petre, Trinity College, Dublin, etc. etc., was born at Cork in 1794, and died in London in 1842. This versatile writer and singular man of genius began to contribute to *Blackwood* in November 1819. Dr. Moir says that his first article was a translation into Latin of the ballad of "Chevy Chase," which was followed by numerous articles containing both wit and sarcasm, which Mr. Blackwood had to pay for in the case of Leslie *v.* Hebrew. Although he continued to write for *Blackwood*, the publisher was not acquainted with his real name, and the account of their first interview is amusingly told by Dr. Moir:*—

"I remember having afterwards been informed by Mr. Blackwood that the Doctor arrived in Edinburgh on Sunday evening, and found his way out to Newington, where he then resided. It so happened that the whole family had gone to the country a few days before, and in fact the premises except the front gate, were locked up. This the Doctor managed, after

* *Dublin University Magazine*, January 1844, which contains the fullest account of Maginn's life and writings I have seen.

for the Magazine. In the *Noctes* in particular, where the character of the composition allowed most freedom of expression, he took his full swing, and laid about him in true Donnybrook style. Whether the "sore rubs" anticipated by Lockhart occurred I have no means of knowing; probably they did. That he sometimes caused considerable annoyance to the judicious editor will appear from the following brief note to Wilson about this very time. The reference in the

vainly ringing and knocking, to open, and made a circuit of the building, peeping first into one window and then another, where everything looked snug and comfortable, though tenantless. He took occasion afterwards to remark that no such temptations were allowed to prowlers in Ireland.

"On the forenoon of Monday he presented himself in Princes Street—at that time Mr. Blackwood's place of business—and formally asked for an interview with that gentleman. The Doctor was previously well aware that his quizzes on Dowden, Jennings, and Cody of Cork (perfectly harmless as they were), had produced a ferment in that quarter, which now exploded in sending fierce and fiery letters to the proprietor of the Magazine, demanding the name of the writer, as he had received sundry notes from Mr. Blackwood, telling him the circumstances; and on Mr. Blackwood appearing, the stranger apprised him of his wish to have a private conversation with him, and this in the strongest Irish accent he could assume.

"On being closeted together, Mr. Blackwood thought to himself—as Mr. Blackwood afterwards informed me—'Here, at last, is one of the wild Irishmen, and come for no good purpose, doubtless.'

"'You are Mr. Blackwood, I presume,' said the stranger.

"'I am,' answered that gentleman.

"'I have rather an unpleasant business, then, with you,' he added, 'regarding some things which appeared in your Magazine. They are so and so, would you be so kind as to give me the name of the author?'

"'That requires consideration,' said Mr. Blackwood; 'and I must first be satisfied that—'

"'Your correspondent resides in Cork, doesn't he? You need not make any mystery about that.'

"'I decline at present,' said Mr. B., 'giving any information on that head, before I know more of this business—of your purpose—and who you are.'

"'You are very shy, sir,' said the stranger; 'I thought you corre-

conclusion is to Mr. Blackwood's candidature for the office of Lord Provost, in which he was unsuccessful.

"EDINBURGH, *August* 22, 1825.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received your packet in time, and I hope you will find the whole correctly printed, though I was obliged to put to press in a great hurry. I only got Maginn's Song on Saturday night, after I had put the sheets to press.

"On Thursday I received from him some more of the *Noctes*, but I did not like them, as he attacked Moore again with great bitterness for his squibs upon the King, and charged the Marquis of Hastings as a

sponded with Mr. Scott of Cork,' mentioning the assumed name under which the Doctor had hitherto communicated with the Magazine.

"'I beg to decline giving any information on that subject,' was the response of Mr. Blackwood.

"'If you don't know him, then,' sputtered out the stranger, 'perhaps, perhaps you *could* know your own handwriting,' at the same moment producing a packet of letters from his side-pocket. 'You need not deny your correspondence with that gentleman; I am that gentleman.'

"Such was the whimsical introduction of Dr. Maginn to Mr. Blackwood; and after a cordial shake of the hand and a hearty laugh, the pair were in a few minutes up to the elbows in friendship."

From this time, 1820, till 1828, he continued his contributions more or less frequently. In 1824, about the time Mr. Lockhart writes of him, he was appointed foreign correspondent of *The Representative;* but as this newspaper was not long-lived, he was again thrown upon his resources, and he earned a scanty livelihood by writing for the periodicals. He assisted, as Mr. Lockhart says, Theodore Hook in the *John Bull*, and obtained so much reputation as a political writer, that on the establishment of the *Standard*, he was appointed joint editor of the latter. He was ultimately connected with the foundation of *Fraser's Magazine* in 1830, and along with Father Mahony, Mr. Hugh Fraser, and others, gave that periodical his heartiest support. He was then in the zenith of his fame, and his society courted; but in 1834 he was again corresponding with Mr. Blackwood, dating his contributions from a garret in Wych Street, Strand, and from this time till his death his condition was one of wretchedness.

hoary courtier, who had provoked Moore *with his libels upon the King.* I have written him that it really will not do to run a-muck in this kind of way. I hope you will, on the whole, like this number, and that you will be in good spirits to do something very soon for next one. I fully expected to have had the pleasure of a letter from you either yesterday or to-day.

"A letter from you, however short, is always a treat. The canvass for the Provostship is as hot as ever, but the result does not now appear so certain as when I last wrote you; still I do not despair, and I trust we shall be successful.—I am, my dear Sir, yours truly,

"W. BLACKWOOD."

Mr. Lockhart's temporary disgust at magazine-writing did not affect his productive activity. Very soon after writing the foregoing letter, he was hard at work writing articles for *Janus,* which began to be printed early in September, and was published about the close of November 1825. The various letters which passed between the editors and the publisher on the subject are entirely occupied with the details of "MS.," "slips," "proofs," and "formes." They contain, however, the materials for ascertaining the contributions of the two principal writers, a list of which will be found in the Appendix. The following letter from my father to Delta is given, as being the first communication between them which I have found, and as illustrating his mode of discharging the delicate duty of telling a friend that his MS. is not "suitable." It is also his first letter dated from Gloucester Place :—

"GLOUCESTER PLACE, No. 8, *Friday*.

"MY DEAR SIR,—On my arrival here, a few days ago, I found in the hands of Messrs. Oliver and Boyd, an extract from a tale intended for *Janus*. As I take an interest in that volume, I trouble you with a few lines, as I know your handwriting.

"I had intended writing to you to request a contribution to *Janus*, but delayed it from time to time, uncertain of the progress that double-faced gentleman was making towards publicity.

"Copy for 350 pages is already in the printer's hands, and I have about 120 pages of my own MS., and of a friend, to send in a few days, which, owing to peculiar circumstances, must make part of the volume, so that 470 pages may be supposed to be contributed. A number of small pieces too are floating about, which it is not easy to know how to dispose of.

"I am, however, anxious that something of yours should be in the volume, and if it be possible, there shall be, if you wish it.

"The funeral scene is certainly good, natural, and true, and as part of a tale, I have no doubt it will be effective. Standing by itself it does not strike me as one of your best things (many of which are most beautiful and most lively), and I should wish to have in *Janus* one that *I* at least like better.

"I had in my possession, some time ago, a MS. volume of yours containing several prose tales, one of which,[1] about a minister, a bachelor, I think, or widower, loving

[1] This appeared in the volume under the title, "Saturday Night in the Manse."

or being made to love his housekeeper, or somebody else, I thought admirable. Another tale, too, there was of a lively character that I liked much, but I forget its name.[1] I generally forget, or at least retain an indistinct remembrance of what gives me most pleasure. Had I that volume I would select a tale from it for *Janus*. The worst of *Janus* is, that a page holds so little in comparison with a magazine page, that even a short story takes up necessarily great room.

"Should the volume prove an annual, I hope you will contribute.

"This is not a confidential communication. Mr. Lockhart and I have no objections to be spoken of as friends and contributors to *Janus*, but, on the contrary, wish to be. But let all contributors keep their own counsel.—I am, my dear Sir, yours with much regard,

"JOHN WILSON."

On her way to Edinburgh from Elleray, my mother was taken alarmingly ill, and was for some time in a very precarious state. This, combined with the labours of the opening University session, left little leisure for literary work; MS. for *Janus* was therefore in great demand, and proof-sheets had to be revised after the class hour in the Professor's "retiring-room." Some contributions had also been expected from Mr. De Quincey, which, however, did not make their appearance. The work at last came out in the form of a very finely-printed small octavo volume of 542 pages, which was sold at the price of 12s. There were no embellish-

[1] Probably "Daniel Cathie, tobacconist."

ments beyond a vignette representation of the two-faced god, and no names were given on the title-page or in the table of contents. The preface announces that the volume is intended to be the first of a series, to be published annually early in November. It never went, however, beyond its first number, not having received encouragement enough to warrant the risk of a second trial. As the publisher dealt liberally with the authors, we may infer that the book did not pay so well as it might have done with poorer matter and a lower price. There was, in fact, *too much* good writing in this now little-known volume: such a crop could not be "annual," and so it came up but once. Its name suggests the character of the subjects contained in its pages, which vary in range between the seriousness of philosophy and the facetiousness of genuine humour; as free from dulness in the one kind as from flippancy in the other. Among the shorter and lighter papers, there is one from the French, but not a translation, that gives the history of a dog, "Moustache," whose characteristic individuality is as skilfully portrayed as if it had come from the hand of a literary "Landseer."[1] From the list of contents it will be seen that nearly the whole was produced by the editors. Of the few contributions by other hands, are

[1] Of such is Dr. John Brown, who, in *Our Dogs*, has unravelled the instinctive beauties and touching sagacity of the canine race, with a delicacy of perception and cunning workmanship of thought truly admirable. "Rab," and "Moustache," in their devotion of purpose, would perfectly have appreciated each other; but alas! the faithful companion of "Ailie," and the brave "Moustache," must remain for ever the heroes of their own tales. These are not dogs to be met with every day; they come, like epic poems, after a lapse of ages, and like them are immortal.

Miss Edgeworth's witty "Thoughts on Bores," and one or two pleasant sketches by Delta.

Mr. Lockhart left Chiefswood for London in December 1825, to assume the editorship of the *Quarterly Review*. The following letter appears to have been written the day after he had taken possession of the editorial chair:—

"25, PALL MALL, 23*d December* 1825.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—It was only yesterday that we got ourselves at length established under a roof of our own, otherwise you should have heard from me, and, as it is, I must entreat that whatever you do as to the rest of my letter, you will write *immediately*, to say how Mrs. Wilson is. I have often thought with pain of the state in which we left her, and, through her, you, and I shall not think pleasantly of anything connected with you, until I hear better tidings.

"Murray, from what he said to me, would answer Boyd's letter in the affirmative. I did not choose to press him, but said what I could with decency.[1]

"As I feared and hinted, you are rather in a scrape about the Uranus poem, the proprietor of it being some old Don, who for these seven years had dunned Murray constantly, the bookseller in the meantime writing, he says, to Blackwood, equally in vain.

"One thing remains; that the whole *MS.* be *forthwith* transmitted to Murray; in that case the old gent. may probably never know of the printing of any part. I fear the volume is heavy on the whole; but I know the deepness of my own prejudice against metaphysical

[1] Probably refers to Murray becoming the London publisher of *Janus*.

essays, and would fain hope it is not largely partaken.

"Maginn is off for Paris, where I hope he will behave himself. He has an opportunity of retrieving much, if he will use it. I think there can be nothing in his removal to injure his writings in *Blackwood*, but *au contraire*, and certainly nothing to diminish their quantity.

"Mr. ——— has yesterday transferred to me the treasures of the Review; and I must say, my dear Wilson, that his whole stock is not worth five shillings. Thank God, other and better hands are at work for my first number, or I should be in a pretty hobble. My belief is that he has been living on the stock bequeathed by Gifford, and the contributions of a set of d—d idiots of Oriel. But mind now, Wilson, I am sure to have a most hard struggle to get up a very good first Number, and, if I do not, it will be the Devil. I entreat you to cast about for a serious and important subject; give your mind full scope, and me the benefit of a week's Christmas leisure.

"Murray's newspaper concerns seem to go on flourishingly. The title, I am rather of belief, will be 'The Representative,'[1] but he has not yet fixed.

[1] Murray's newspaper concerns did not go on "flourishingly," as may be gathered from the following note:—"With Mr. Benjamin Disraeli for editor, and witty Dr. Maginn for Paris Correspondent, John Murray's new daily paper, *The Representative* (price 7d.), began its inauspicious career on the 25th January 1826. It is needless to rake up the history of a dead and buried disaster. After a short and unhappy career of six months, *The Representative* expired of debility on the subsequent 29th of July. The Thames was not on fire, and Printing House Square stood calmly where it had stood. When, in after years, sanguine and specu-

"I shall write you in due time, and at length, as to that business.

"As for me personally, everything goes on smoothly. I have the kindest letters from Southey, and indeed from *all* the real supporters of the Review. Give my love to Cay, and do now *write, write, write* to yours affectly., J. G. LOCKHART."

During the following year my father contributed no less than twenty-seven articles, or portions of articles, to the Magazine, including the following, afterwards republished, in the collected works by Professor Ferrier:—"Cottages," "Streams," "Meg Dods," "Gymnastics." The only month in which nothing of his appeared was May; the month of April, which closed the session, being his busiest at the College, except November. During the autumn of this year, business of some importance obliged him to go into Westmoreland. He was accompanied by his daughter Margaret and his son Blair, and during his absence wrote regularly to his wife, giving pleasant local gossip and descriptions of the improvements at Elleray. The dinner at Kendal, of which he speaks, was one of political interest connected with the Lowther family, at which he, as a matter of course, was desirous to be present. Mrs. Wilson's brother-in-law, Mr. James Penny Machell of Penny Bridge, was High Sheriff that year at the Lancaster

lative projectors enlarged to John Murray on the excellent opening for a new daily paper, he of Albemarle Street would shake his head, and with rather a melancholy expression of countenance, pointing to a thin folio on his shelves, would say, 'Twenty thousand pounds are buried there.'"—"Histories of Publishing Houses," *Critic*, January 21, 1860.

Assizes, which accounts for the allusions to the trials, besides that some of them excited unusual interest.

"KENDAL, *22d August* 1826,
Tuesday Morning, Half-past Three.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I wrote you a few lines from Carlisle, stating our successful progress thus far, and we arrived here same night at half-past eleven. Not a bed in the house, nor any supper to be got, the cook having gone to bed. I however got Maggie and Blair a very nice bed in a private house, and saw them into it. I slept, or tried to do so, on a sofa, but quite in vain. In a quarter of an hour we set off for Elleray in a chaise, which we shall reach to breakfast about half-past ten We are all a good deal disgusted with our reception last night in this bad and stupid inn.

"It is a very fine day, and Elleray will be beautiful; I should think of you every hour I am there, but to-morrow you know I am to be in Kendal again, and shall write to you before the *dinner*. I have seen nobody in the town whatever, and, of course, heard nothing about the intended meeting. The Mackeands were hanged yesterday (Monday), and I have just been assured that the *brother* Wakefield, who was to have been tried on Saturday, has forfeited his bail, and is off, fearing from the judge's manner that he would be imprisoned—if he stood trial—five years.[1] So there will

[1] The two Mackeands were brothers, who had committed an atrocious murder on the inhabitants of a wayside inn, in Lancashire. The "brother Wakefield" was no less a person than Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whose shameful deception wove a strange romance around the life of Helen Turner, and furnished to the annals of law one of the most peculiar cases that has ever been recorded.

be no trial at all at Lancaster. I hope, therefore, yet to be at Hollow Oak.

"Think of my bad luck in losing seven sovereigns from there being a hole in my lecturing pantaloons. All the silver fell out of the one pocket, which Blair picked up, but the sovereigns had dropped for ever through the other.

"I will write as often as possible, and tell you all that I hear about the various places and people. Kindest love to Johnny and Mary, who will have their turn some day, and also to the lovely girl and George Watson.

"The chaise is at the gate, and is an open carriage. —I am, my dearest Jane, ever your affectionate husband, JOHN WILSON."

"KENDAL, *August* 23, 1826,
Wednesday Night, Twelve o'clock.

"MY BELOVED JANE,—The dinner is over, and all went well. Your letter I have just received, of which more anon. Why did you not write on Monday night? but thank God it is come now. We are all well, and my next, which will be a post between, shall be a long, descriptive, full and particular account of every one thing in the country. It is your own fault that this is not a long letter, for my misery all day has been dreadful. Mr. Fleming was with me all day, and was the kindest of friends; and George Watson will, I am sure, write for you.

"I shall see the Machells, who have returned home, and well, I understand. Once more, God bless and protect you! and get your spectacles ready for next

letter, which I shall have time to write at length. Hitherto I have not had an hour.

"To-morrow, at Elleray, I shall write an admirable epistle.—Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN WILSON.

"Love to Johnny, Mary, Umbs, and George Watson."

"ELLERAY, *August 24th*, 1826,
Thursday Forenoon.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I shall give you a sort of *précis* of our movements. On Tuesday morning, at nine o'clock, we left Kendal in an open carriage, and reached Elleray before eleven. The day was goodish, indeed excellent at that time, and the place looked beautiful as of old. A handsome new rail runs along from the junction of the new avenue, all along to front of the new house, and has a parkish appearance—painted of a slate colour. The house we found standing furnished and in all respects just as we left it, so that, I suppose, the family have just walked out. The plants in the entrance reach near the roof, one and all of them, but have few flowers, and must be pruned, I fear, being enormously lank in proportion to their thickness, but all in good health. The little myrtles are about a yard high, and in high feather. The trees and shrubs have not grown very much,—it seems a bad year for them; but the roses and smaller flowers have flourished, and those sent from Edinburgh were much admired. The walks in the garden are all gravelled neatly; the bower is as green as the sea, and really looks well. The hedge lately planted round the upper part is most thriving,

and strawberry-beds luxuriant; in short, the garden looks pretty. The crops in the fields are bad, as all in the country are.

"In an hour or two after our arrival it began to rain and blow and bluster like Brougham, so I left the house. Dinner was served in good style at six; fowls, fish, and mutton. In the evening William Garnet came up, and was, as you may suppose, in a state of bliss. The boy is well, and I am to be his godfather by proxy. On Wednesday morning, I never doubted but there would be a letter from you, as I made you promise to write every night at six; but I never make myself understood. It gave me great pain to find there was none; but this I alluded to before, so say no more now, but will give you a *viva voce* scold for it. Fleming went with me in the chaise to Kendal, and at half-past three we sat down to dinner: Lord Lowther and Portarlington (pronounced Polington), Colonel Lowther, Henry Lowther, Howard of Levens, Colonel Wilson, Noel of Underlay, Bolton, the little Captain, and fifty-six others. It went off with *éclat*, and I speechified a little, but not too much, and gave satisfaction. Barber came over on purpose, and is evidently in the clouds about what I said of his cottage, although he made no allusion to it. The ball in the evening was apparently a pleasant one, but thin, as it was only fixed *that morning* that there was to be one. At twelve o'clock the mail came in, and I went down myself to the Post-Office, and got the postmaster to open the bag, and, lo and behold, your letter of Tuesday, which took a load of needless anxiety off my soul. God bless you! I returned to the inn,

and Barber took me immediately in his chaise to Elleray, which we reached about two, and had a little supper; he then went on, and I to bed.

"I am now preparing, after sound sleep, to call at the Wood and Calgarth. We shall dine at the Wood. The children were to have dined there yesterday, but the rain prevented them. Mrs. Barlow came up in the evening, they tell me, with Miss North. Gale was found guilty of two assaults at Lancaster, but the anti-Catholic doctor allowed him to get off without fine. How absurd altogether the quarrel originating in Catholic Emancipation. I shall probably go to Penny Bridge on Saturday, but will write again to-morrow, so send to the Post-Office on Saturday evening, and on Sunday too, for letters are not delivered till Monday. But be sure you, or Mary, or Johnny, or George Watson, write every night, till farther orders. The little pony, Tickler, and Nanny, the cow, are all well, so is Star; Colonsay is sold for four pounds. The last year's calf is as large as any cow, and there is another calf and two pigs. I shall give you any news I hear in my next. I will write to Johnny soon.—Your affectionate and loving husband,

"JOHN WILSON."

The "Colonsay" mentioned here as sold "for four pounds," had been at one time a pony of remarkable strength and sagacity. A few summers previously, my father became acquainted with a Mr. Douglas, who, with his family, was then residing near Ambleside. This gentleman possessed a handsome and prepossessing appearance; beyond that he

had not much to recommend him, being nothing but a sporting character, and was after a time discovered not to be *sans peur* and *sans tache*. However, he visited in all directions, frequently coming to Elleray. One day he appeared, mounted on a very fine animal, which he said was thorough-bred, and an unrivalled trotter. This statement gave rise to some discussion on the subject of trotting, *à propos* of which, Wilson brought forward the merits of a certain grey cob in his possession, half jestingly proposing a match between it and the above mentioned "thoroughbred." Mr. Douglas was delighted to meet with an adventure so entirely to his taste, so then and there the day and hour was fixed for the match to come off—a fortnight from that time.

It is a long-ago story, but I well remember the excitement it created in the *ménage* at Elleray, and the unusual care bestowed upon the cob,—how his feet were kept in cold cloths, and how he was fed, and gently exercised daily. In short, the mystery about all the ongoings at the stable was most interesting, and we began to regard with something akin to awe the hitherto not more than commonly cared for animal.

At last the day anxiously looked for arrived. Full of glee and excitement we ran—sisters and brothers—down the sloping fields, to take a seat upon the top of a wall that separated us from the road, and where we could see the *starting-point*. "Colonsay" was led in triumph to meet his fashionable rival, whose "get-up" was certainly excellent. Both rider and horse wore an air of the turf, while my father, in common riding

dress, mounted his somewhat ordinary-looking steed, just as a gentleman would do going to take his morning ride. At last, after many manœuvres of a knowing sort, Mr. Douglas declared himself ready to start, and off they set, in pace very fairly matched,—at least so it seemed to us from the Elleray gate.

To Lowood, as far as I remember, was the distance for this trial. Umpires were stationed at their respective points on the road, and Billy Balmer kept a steady eye from his station upon "Colonsay," whose propensity for dashing in at open gates was feared might ruin his chance of winning. Meantime, the juvenile band on the wall, along with Mrs. Wilson, were keeping eager watch for the messenger who was to bring intelligence of the conquering hero; and how great was their delight when in due time they heard that "Colonsay" had won the day; Mr. Douglas's much boasted of trotter having broken into a canter.

This trotting match with the handsome adventurer, was the origin of "Christopher on Colonsay" in the pages of *Blackwood*, which did not appear, however, till ten years afterwards.

CHAPTER XII.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1827-29.

ONE who knew my father well, said, "That in the multiform nature of the man, his mastery over the hearts of ingenuous youth was one of his finest characteristics. An essay or poem is submitted to him by some worthy young man, he does not like it, and says so in general terms. The youth is not satisfied, and, in the tone of one rather injured, begs to know specific faults. The generous aristarch, never dealing haughtily with young worth, instantly sits down, and begins by conveying, in the most fearless terms of praise, his sense of that worth, but, this done, woe be to the luckless piece of prose or numerous verse! Down goes the scalpel with the most minute savagery of dissection, and the whole tissues and ramifications of fault are laid naked and bare. The young man is astonished, but his nature is of the right sort; he never forgets the lesson, and, with bands of filial affection stronger than hooks of steel, he is knit for life to the man who has dealt with him thus. Many a young heart will recognise the peculiar style of the great nature I speak of. This service was once done to Delta, he was the young man to profit by it, and the friendship was all the

firmer."[1] Mr. Aird probably alludes to the following letter, written by Professor Wilson in January 1827, to his friend Dr. Moir :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to write you a kind letter, suggested by the non-insertion of your Christmas verses in the last number of 'Maga'—a letter occasioned rather than caused by that circumstance—for I have often wished to tell you my mind about yourself and your poetry.

"I think you—and I have no doubt about the soundness of my opinion—one of the most delightful poets of this age. You have not, it is true, written any one great work, and, perhaps, like myself, never will; but you have written very many exquisitely beautiful poems which, as time rolls on, will be finding their way into the mindful hearts of thousands, and becoming embodied with the *corpus* of true English poetry. The character and the fame of many of our finest writers are of this kind. For myself, I should desire no other—in some manner I hope they are mine; yours they certainly are, and will be more and more as the days and years proceed.

"Hitherto, I have not said as much as this of you publicly, and for several good reasons. *First,* It is best and kindest to confer praise after it is unquestionably due. *Secondly,* You, like myself, are too much connected with the Magazine to be praised in it, except when the occasion *either* demands it or entirely justifies it. *Thirdly,* Genevieve is not my favourite poem, because the subject is essentially *non-tragic to my imagi-*

[1] Thomas Aird's *Memoir of D. M. Moir.*

nation, finely as it is written. *Fourthly*, I shall, and that, too, right early, speak of you as you ought to be spoken of, because the time has come when that can be done rightfully and gracefully. *Fifthly*, I will do so when I feel the proper time has come; and, *lastly*, As often as I feel inclined, which may be not unfrequent. I love to see genius getting its due; and, although your volume has not sold extensively, you are notwithstanding a popular and an admired writer.

"Having said this much conscientiously, and from the heart, I now beg leave to revert to a matter of little importance, surely, in itself, but of some importance to me and my feelings, since, unluckily, it has rather hurt yours, and that too, not unnaturally or unreasonably, for I too have been a *rejected contributor*. In one respect you have altogether misconceived Mr. Blackwood's letter, or he has altogether misconceived the very few words I said about the article. I made no comparison whatever between it and any other article of the kind in 'Maga,' either written by you or by any one else. But I said that the Beppo or Whistlecraft measure had become so common, that its sound was to me intolerable, unless it was executed in a transcendent style, like many of Mr. Lockhart's stanzas in the Mad Banker of Amsterdam, which, in my opinion, are equal to anything in Byron himself. Your composition, I frankly and freely say now, will not, in my opinion, bear comparison, for strength and variety, with that alluded to. I said, further, that there had been poems, and good ones too, without end, and also in magazines, in that measure; that it had, for a year or so, been allowed to cease, and

that I wished not to see its revival, except in some most potent form indeed. That is all I said to Mr. Blackwood. I will now say, further, in defence or explanation of the advice I gave him, that the composition is not, in my opinion, peculiarly and characteristically *Christopherish*, and therefore, with all its merit, would not have greatly delighted the readers of 'Maga' at the beginning of a new year. *Secondly*, The topics are not such as Christopher, on looking back for two or three years, could have selected, and many important ones are not alluded to at all. That to me is a fatal objection. *Thirdly*, There are occasional allusions that are rather out of time and place, and seem to have been—as I believe they were—written, not lately, but a good while ago. So that I do not now, as I did not then, think it a composition that would have graced and dignified a new year's number, preceding all other articles, as a sort of manifesto from the pen of C. N., and this, partly from its not being very like him in style, but chiefly from its being very unlike him in topics.

"Having said so much, I will venture to say a little more, well knowing that my criticism will not offend, even although it may not convince.[1] Of the first four stanzas, the first is to me beautiful, the second moderately good, the third, absolutely bad, and the fourth, not very happy, Irving and Rowland Hill being better out of North's mind altogether on a Christmas occasion. The

[1] Then follows a minute criticism of the poem, stanza by stanza, too detailed to be given entire. A few touches may suffice, indicating that in politics the extreme opinions of Christopher North, as expressed in *Blackwood*, were not always those of John Wilson.

nineteenth stanza is, I think, very bad indeed, no meaning being intended, and the expression being cumbrous and far from ingenious. Twentieth stanza I see no merit in at all, nor do I understand it, I hope, for I trust there is more meaning in it than meets my ear. Jeffrey's age was a bad joke at the first, worse when repeated in a Christmas Carol for 1827-28. The whole stanza displeases me much. Twenty-four is pretty well, but by no means equal to what would have been the view-holloa of old C. N. on first tally-hoing a Whig. The last line of it does not tell, or point to any one person; if so, not distinctly. Twenty-fifth contains a repetition of what has been many thousand times repeated in 'Maga,' *usque ad nauseam*, by that eternal Londoner from Yorkshire, and wants the free freshness with which C. N. would have breathed out himself on such a topic, if at all. Perhaps I dislike twenty-eighth stanza, because I am by no means sure of its political economy, and never can join in the cry in the Magazine against free trade. Twenty-ninth stanza is neither good nor bad perhaps, but it leans towards the latter. Thirty-third is written, I fear, in the same vein with much of our enemies' abuse against us. Thirty-fourth opens inefficiently with Eldon. He is a fine old fellow, but in some things a bigot, and getting very old; yet I love and respect him, as you do. Still this, and stanzas thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh are not glorious, and free, and exulting, but the contrary, and the list of our friends is too scanty. Thirty-sixth is unworthy of Sir Walter, and *Δ*, and C. N., and J. W. Pardon me for saying so. In stanza fortieth I did not expect

anything more about Time, and be damned to him! All the stanzas that follow to forty-sixth inclusive, are excellent, and in themselves worthy of *Δ*. But what if there be no snow and no skating at Christmas? No appearance of it at present. Besides, in such an address, they are too numerous. Forty-seventh, forty-eighth, and forty-ninth are feeble in the extreme; and the recipe for hot-pint, although correct, especially so.

"Finally, the composition, as a whole, is of a very mediocre character, in the opinion of your kind friend and most sincere admirer, Professor Wilson.

"I have never, in the whole course of my life, given an opinion in writing more than three lines long, of any composition of any man, whom I did not know to be a man of genius and talents. I have given you this long, scrawling, imperfectly expressed opinion of your verses, because I had already let you know that it was unfavourable, and therefore there is no impertinence in giving some of the reasons of my belief.

"That you should agree with me wholly is not to be expected; but that you will agree with me partly, I have no doubt, by and by. I say so, from experience, for I have often and often seen, all at once, compositions of my own to be good for little or nothing, which I had at the time of writing them thought well of, and even admired.

"One thing I *know* you are wrong in, and that is, your preferring this composition to all you ever wrote for 'Maga.' You have written for 'Maga' many of the most delightful verses that are in the English language,

and as for 'Mansie Waugh,'[1] it is inimitable, and better than Galt's very best. That it should have stopped—if the fault of Mr. Blackwood—is to me inexplicable and very displeasing, and I have more than once said so to him, for nothing better ever was in 'Maga' since she was born. Mr. Blackwood certainly thought the rejected composition a good one, and it was owing to me that it was rejected. I take that on my own head. But that 'Mansie Waugh' should be stopped, is to me disgusting, because it was stopped in my teeth, and in yours who have the glory of it.

"Let me conclude with the assurance of my esteem for you, my dear Sir, no less as a man than an author. I am happy to know that you are universally esteemed where you would wish to be, in your profession, and in your private character, and that your poetical faculty has done you no harm, but on the contrary great good.

"I wish you would dine with us on Saturday *at six o'clock*. I expect De Quincey, and one or two other friends, and there is a *bed* for *you*, otherwise I would not ask you at so late an hour.—I am, yours affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

With the above exception, the memorials of this year are confined to the pages of *Blackwood*, to which he contributed in one month (June), when a double number was published, six of the principal articles. How little he thought of knocking off a *Noctes* when

[1] *The Life of Mansie Waugh, Tailor in Dalkeith.* 12mo. Edinburgh, 1828. A work full of humour, and abounding in faithful sketches of Scottish life and manners.

in the humour, may be judged from a note to Mr. Ballantyne, the printer, in which he says:—"I think of trying to-day and to-morrow to write a 'Noctes.' Would you have any objection to be introduced as a member? Would your brother? Of course I need not say, that, with a little fun, I shall represent you both in the kindest feeling. Pray let me know.—Yours very truly, JOHN WILSON.

"*Subject.*—A party are to assemble in the *New Shop* to dinner."

The following note to the same gentleman may come in as a minor illustration of the "calamities of authors:"—

"Last night *about eleven* o'clock I got two proofs to correct which took me nearly *three hours.* I ordered the boy, therefore, to go away, and come early in the morning. It is exactly half-past eight, and I have had the luxury of three hours' work after supper for no end whatever, instead of indulging in it before breakfast. Yet to get on is, I understand, of great importance. Here, then, are hours on hours lost, not by me assuredly; then by whom?

"Why the devil does not the devil hasten himself of an August morning? What right can any devil, red hot from Tartarus, have to disturb me, who never injured him, for three long hours including midnight, *all for no purpose but to make me miserable?*

"I am, my dear Sir, very wroth; therefore, see henceforth, that delays of this kind do not occur, for though I am willing to work when necessary, I am not willing to sacrifice sleep, and sometimes suffer, which

is worse, from want of arrangement or idleness in the infernal regions.—Yours sincerely,

"JOHN WILSON.

"*Thursday morning.*—With two corrected proofs lying before me for several hours needlessly at a time when they are most wanted in the Shades."

In the month of July of this year, my mother writes to her sister:—

"We are all quite well, and looking forward to a few weeks' stay on the banks of the Tweed with great pleasure. I forget whether I mentioned when I last wrote to you that Mr. Wilson had taken lodgings at Innerleithen (about six miles from Peebles). We go on the 2d of August, the day after the boys' vacation commences.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart, and their two children are come here this summer, I am sorry to say the latter in search of health. Mr. L. is looking well, and not a bit changed in any respect.

"Ebony has presented me with the *Life of Napoleon*, 9 vols.; everybody is now devouring it, but what is thought of it I have not heard; it will last me some years to get through it if I live; at least if I read at my customary pace."

The three autumnal months were spent at Innerleithen, the Professor visiting Edinburgh from time to time, to attend to his literary affairs, finding on his return relaxation in his favourite amusement of fishing, or rambling over the hills to St. Mary's Loch, and

not unfrequently spending a day at Altrive with the Ettrick Shepherd. He had intended, in the following year, to let Elleray; but not having found a suitable tenant, he spent the autumn there himself with his family.

From a letter to his friend, the Rev. Mr. Fleming of Rayrig, written in the spring of 1828, it will be seen how fondly he clung to the place, after having made up his mind as a matter of duty to sacrifice the pleasure of spending his summers there. Referring in this letter to the Magazine, he says :—

"Of *Blackwood's Magazine* I am not the editor, although, I believe, I very generally get both the credit and discredit of being Christopher North. I am one of the chief writers, perhaps the chief, and have all along been so, but never received one shilling from the proprietor, except for my own compositions. Being generally on the spot, I am always willing to give him my advice, and to supply such articles as may be most wanted when I have leisure to do so. But I hold myself answerable to the public only for my own articles, although I have never chosen to say, nor shall I ever, that I am not editor, as that might appear to be shying responsibility, or disclaiming my real share in the work. To you, however, I make the avowal, which is to the letter correct, of Christopher North's ideal character. I am in great measure the parent nevertheless, nor am I ashamed of the old gentleman, who is, though rather perverse, a thriving bairn.

"I shall be at Elleray, with my daughters Margaret and Mary, about the 18th or 20th of April, and hope

to stay a month. I intend to let Elleray, if I can get a suitable tenant, for *three years*. My children are all just growing up, and I cannot remove them from Edinburgh, nor can I leave them, even if the expense of having two houses were such as I could prudently encounter. I have therefore brought my mind to make the sacrifice of my summers, nowhere else so happy as on the banks of beautiful and beloved Windermere. My visit is chiefly to make arrangements for letting Elleray during the period now mentioned.

"I feel great delicacy in asking any questions of a friend relative to concerns of his friends. But I hope you will not think me guilty of indelicacy in writing to know on what terms Bellfield was let to Mr. Thomson. I am wholly at a loss to know what to ask for Elleray, and Bellfield would be a rule to go by in fixing the rent. I am anxious you will do me the justice to think that I am one of the last men in the world to seek to know anything of the kind, except in the case like the present, where it would be of advantage to my interests and that of my family; or if there be any objection to your informing me of the point, perhaps you would have the goodness to give me your opinion of what might be the annual rent of the house, garden, and outhouses of Elleray. Whoever takes it must keep the place in order, and therefore must keep on my gardener on his present wages. The land I could either keep myself, or let it along with the house, the whole or in part.

"Mr. —— would act for me, I know, but ——, like other idle people, is too free of his tongue about my

intentions, of which he knows nothing, and has been busy telling all people that I am never again to return to Elleray, and that Elleray is to be sold. This rather displeases me. Mr. —— would oblige me in anything, but is not very skilled in character, and might, I fear, be imposed upon if he met with people wishing to impose. The idea of making Mr. Fleming useful to me has something in it abhorrent to my nature. Do, however, my dear Sir, forgive my natural anxiety on this point, for if I should let Elleray to a family that would injure it, it would make me truly unhappy. I love it as I love life itself; and, in case I leave Elleray unlet, in your hands I would feel that it was as safe as in my own. I am, however, I repeat it, duly sensible of the delicacy of making such a request to such a friend; and one word will be sufficient. My intention is to keep the cottage in my own hands, with the privilege to inhabit it *myself* if I choose for a month or two, which will be the utmost in my power; although that privilege I will give up if necessary.

"Mrs. Wilson is much better in her general health than she has been since her first unhappy illness; but is still far from being well, and my anxieties are still great. I am, however, relieved from the most dreadful of all fears, and I trust in God that the fits will not again return. Her constitution would seem to have outlived them, but they have been of a most heart-breaking kind, and I look on all life as under the darkness of a shadow. John, my eldest boy, is five feet ten inches tall, and goes to College next winter. My daughters you will, I hope, see soon, and yours

must come up to Elleray and stay a day or two with them, while they will be but too happy to be again at sweet Rayrig. I hear of a house having been built below Elleray by Mr. Gardiner. I hope it is not an eye-sore. If it be, my eyes, I am sorry to state, will not be often offended by it for some years to come. A curious enough book on transplanting trees has been published here lately, which I will bring you a copy of. Sir Henry Stewart, the author, has made a place well wooded and thriving out of a desert, and has removed hundreds of trees of all kinds, from twenty to fifty years old, with underwood, all of which have for years been in a most flourishing condition.

"I think you will get this letter on Sunday morning. I shall think of you all in church.—Your affectionate friend, JOHN WILSON."

As soon as his college duties were over, he set out for Elleray. He writes from Bowness to my mother, May 16, 1828 :—

"MY DEAR TURKESS,—I have this morning received your long and kind letter; and though I wrote to you yesterday, I do so again. First, then, I enclose a twelve-pound note, which, I hope, will settle the accounts, though you don't mention the amount of the rendering one. I will thank you to write to Robert as follows :—'Dear Robert, be so good as send to me the ten-pound receipt to sign, if convenient, and I will return it by post. Jane is to tell you to do so, to save you a postage. If you can give her the money *first* it will be convenient; if not, she will wait till I return the paper.—Yours,

J. W.' Your taste in furniture is excellent, being the same as my own; so choose a paper of a bluish sort, and don't doubt that I will like the room the better for its being entirely your taste, carpet and all. Johnny may go to the fishing whenever you think it safe; but remember wet feet are dangerous to him at present. If he goes, tell him to go and come by the coach, and give him stockings to put on dry. To fish there with dry feet is not possible; and he is not strong yet. Send him to school, with a note saying it was but an irruption, for I cannot think it was the small-pox. If it was, he is cured now. I hope they are good boys. God bless them both, Umbs, and their good mother!

"Yesterday, we rode to Ambleside,—Mary on Blair's pony, which is in high health and very quiet, and spirited too, Maggy on the nondescript. We called on the Lutwidges, whom we saw. They are all well, —she looking very beautiful, and in the family-way of course. On the Edmunds, too. We called on the Norths, and were most kindly received. I left the girls there, and proceeded to Grasmere, along the new road by the lake-side, which is beautiful. Found Hartley Coleridge, a little tipsy, I fear, but not very much; went with him to Sammy Barber's. Sammy was delighted to see me. He has unroofed his house, and is raising it several feet. He has built a bed-room for himself, thirty feet long, by twenty wide, with two fireplaces, and one enormous window commanding a view of the whole lake. It is the most beautiful room I ever saw. All the rest of the house is equally good, and still the external look improved.

"Wordsworth is in London. I called for the nymphs at eight o'clock, and we reached Elleray about ten o'clock—all well. Both nymphs are recovered, though Mary has still a little sore-throat left. To-day, we have walked to Bowness, and made some calls. We visited the island, and Miss Curwen comes to Elleray next Wednesday to stay all night. She is a sweet girl, modest, sensible, amiable, and English. They are a worthy family. The girls are just now gone on to Rayrig with Miss Taylor, and I shall join them there. I wait behind to write to the Turkess. The country now is in perfect beauty; and I think of one who has been a kind, and affectionate, and good wife to me at all hours. If I do not, may the beauty of nature pass away from my eyes! To-morrow we dine at Calgarth. On Tuesday next, Sammy Barber and H. Coleridge dine with us. Neither Wellock nor M'Neil has appeared, and I shall wait for them no more. Captain Hope and his lady and a piccaniny have just driven up to the door of the inn; he is a son of the Lord President's, and brother of the Solicitor-General, and a friend of mine. They are just off again. Write as soon as you can or choose, and tell Johnny or Blair to write too—a conjoint letter. Once more, love to you all.—Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN WILSON."

The following letters show how well he knew to adapt his communications to the taste of his correspondents :—

TO HIS SON BLAIR.

"ELLERAY, *Friday Afternoon, May* 23, 1828.

"MY DEAREST BLAIR,—Your very entertaining and witty letter came in due course at the breakfast hour, and made us all laugh till we were like to burst our sides; and Mary had very nearly broken a tea-cup. It was, however, rather impertinent. Your pony is in capital health and spirits, and Mary rides him very gently and not too fast. Maggy rides a chestnut cow, which George declares is a horse, and it certainly is rather like one sometimes. There are two cats, both very tame—a black, and a white one with a red tail. I fear the latter kills small birds. The young thrushes have flown, and so have a nest of linnets in the front of the house. The thrush is building again in another place. We had a gooseberry-tart yesterday, which you would have liked very much. On Saturday, we dined at Calgarth, and found all the people there exceedingly well and happy. On Sunday we went to church, and dined at home. On Monday we also dined at home; and on Tuesday, Hartley Coleridge came to dine with us, without Mrs. Barlow, who was ill. On Wednesday we all dined at home; and yesterday Fletcher Fleming and Mr. Harrison from Ambleside dined with us. To-day we are all going to drink tea with Miss Taylor at Bowness, and to go to a children's ball in the evening. Hartley Coleridge is still with us, and sends his love to your mamma and all yourselves. To-morrow we are going down to Penny Bridge, and will return on Monday or Tuesday. On Wednesday, which is Ambleside

Fair, I am going there. On Thursday, there is to be wrestling there. On Friday, Mr. Garnet gives us a dinner; and after that we shall be thinking of coming home again pretty soon. I am happy to hear you and Johnny are good boys. Tell Johnny I am very angry with him for not writing. Tell mamma that I like the paper; and got her last letter this morning. God bless her, and you, and Johnny, and Umbs, and keep you all well and happy till we return. Love, too, to Miss Penny, that is, Aunt Mary; and kind compliments to Mrs. Alison. I will write to mamma from Penny Bridge.—I am, my dear little boy, your most loving and affectionate father, THE OLD MAN."

TO HIS SON JOHN.

"ELLERAY, *Monday Afternoon, June* 2, 1828.

"MY DEAR JOHNNY,—I received your letter this morning, from which I find you are well, and in good spirits. I am satisfied with your place in the Academy, which I hope you will keep till the end, or rather steal up a little. I presume Mr. Gunn intends going on the stage. We left Penny Bridge on Tuesday, and dined at the Island with a large party. On Wednesday, I went to Ambleside fair, and settled a few bills. Richard Sowden dined with me at Elleray on that day, and kept furnishing me with his talk till one o'clock in the morning—the girls being at the Miss Bartons'. On Thursday, I went again to Ambleside, with William and George Fleming, to see the wrestling. It was very good. A man from Cumberland, with a white hat and brown shirt, threatened to fling everybody, and 'foight'

them afterwards. The 'foighting' I put a stop to. He stood till the last, but was thrown by a schoolmaster of the name of Robinson, cousin to the imp who used to be at Elleray, who won the belt with a handsome inscription—'From Professor Wilson.' We had then a number of single matches, the best of three throws; and Collinson of Bowness threw Robinson easily, he himself having been previously thrown by the Cumbrian for the belt. One Drunky, who had also been thrown for the belt, then threw Collinson, and a tailor called Holmes threw Cumberland. A little fellow about the size of Blair, or less, threw a man about six feet high, and fell upon him with all his weight. Holmes, the tailor, threw Rowland Long. The wrestling, on the whole, 'gave the family great delight.' On Friday, we all sailed with Captain Stamp in the 'Emma,' and ran aground at the water-head, but got off in about an hour without damage. The 'Emma' is an excellent, safe, roomy boat, and draws more water than the 'Endeavour.' On the same Friday, we dined with William Garnet, and at tea met some young ladies, the Miss Winyards, and Lady Pasley. We rode home in the dark and the wet. On Saturday we gave a party in the evening to the Flemings, Bellasses, and Miss A. Taylor from Ambleside. We had the band, and danced, and the party was pleasant. On Sunday we stayed at home, the day being blowy; and Miss A. Taylor is still with us. To-day some gentlemen dine at Elleray; so you see we are very gay. To-morrow we are all going a pic-nicking on the Lake. God bless you, my dear Johnny! Mind all your dear mother says, and be

kind in all things, and attentive to her till we return. Love to Blair and Umbs.—Your affectionate father,

"JOHN WILSON.

"The cross lines are for your mamma."

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I intend riding into Kendal on Wednesday, to meet our Edinburgh friends, as it will be satisfactory to hear how you all are. I shall be kept here a few days longer than I intended, because of the want of the needful, which I want to sponge out of Ebony. I shall also send to Robert for the £10, in case you have not got it. I will write to you on Thursday, fixing the day for our return. The girls are both well, and everybody is kind to them. They are just gone to call at Calgarth, with Alicia Taylor on horseback, with John Alexander with them on foot. Owen Loyd, and Joseph Harding, and some others, are to dine with us to-day. Summer is come, and really the most beautiful time of the year is past. Write to me on *Sunday evening*, for we shall not leave this till Tuesday, at the earliest. If you write the day you get this, too, or bid Blair do so, so much the better, for that day is always a happy one on which I hear from you. You are a most unaccountable niggard. Direct Mr. Hood's letter to me here, and send it to me by post. Tell Johnny to call and inquire for Captain Watson, or do so yourself, my dear Jane, first good day. I am glad to hear such good accounts of him. Keep sending me the *Observer* and *Evening Post*. My expectations of my room are very high. I intend to get John Watson to give me a head of you, to hang up over the

chimney-piece. What think you of that? The little man does not sleep well here by himself. I do not fear that I shall find you well and happy.—Yours till death. JOHN WILSON."

The allusions to Hartley Coleridge awaken mingled feelings of pain and pleasure in remembrance of his frequent visits to Elleray, where he was ever a welcome guest. The gentle, humble-hearted, highly gifted man, "Dear Hartley," as my father called him, dreamed through a life of error, loving the good and hating the evil, yet unable to resist it. His companionship was always delightful to the Professor, and many hours of converse they held; his best and happiest moments were those spent at Elleray. My father had a great power over him, and exerted it with kind but firm determination. On one occasion he was kept imprisoned for some weeks under his surveillance in order that he might finish some literary work he had promised to have ready by a certain time. He completed his task, and when the day of release came, it was not intended that he should leave Elleray. But Hartley's evil demon was at hand; without one word of adieu to the friends in whose presence he stood, off he ran at full speed down the avenue, lost to sight amid the trees, seen again in the open highway still running, until the sound of his far-off footsteps gradually died away in the distance, and he himself was hidden, not in the groves of the valley, but in some obscure den, where, drinking among low companions, his mind was soon brought to a level with theirs. Then these clouds would after a time pass away, and he

again returned to the society of those who could appreciate him, and who never ceased to love him.

Every one loved Hartley Coleridge; there was something in his appearance that evoked kindliness. Extremely boyish in aspect, his juvenile air was aided not a little by his general mode of dress—a dark blue cloth round jacket, white trousers, black silk handkerchief tied loosely round his throat; sometimes a straw-hat covered his head, but more frequently it was bare, showing his black, thick, short, curling hair. His eyes were large, dark, and expressive, and a countenance almost sad in expression, was relieved by the beautiful smile which lighted it up from time to time. The tone of his voice was musically soft. He excelled in reading, and very often read aloud to my mother. The contrast between him and the Professor as they walked up and down the drawing-rooms at Elleray was very striking. Both were earnest in manner and peculiar in expression. My father's rapid sweeping steps would soon have distanced poor Hartley, if he had not kept up to him by a sort of short trot; then, standing still for a moment, excited by some question of philosophical interest—perhaps the madness of Hamlet, or whether or not he was a perfect gentleman—they would pour forth such torrents of eloquence that those present would have wished them to speak for ever. After a pause, off again through the rooms backwards and forwards for an hour at a time would they walk; the Professor's athletic form, stately and free in action, and his clear blue eyes and flowing hair, contrasting singularly with Hartley's diminutive stature and dark complexion, as he followed

like some familiar spirit, one moment looking vengeance, the next humble, obeisant. Is it not true that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children? Certain it is that the light of genius he inherited was dimmed from its original source. He found no repose upon earth, but wandered like a breeze, until he was laid down in the quiet churchyard of Grasmere, close beside the resting-place of William Wordsworth.[1]

My father's contributions to the Magazine this year were very extensive, and several of them of enduring interest. They include "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket," "Old North and Young North," "Christmas Dreams," "Health and Longevity," "Salmonia," and "Sacred Poetry." My mother, writing to her sister in September, asks her:—"Have you read Blackwood's last number? I mean any of it. "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket" is thought very good; and Mr. W. expressed a sort of wish our nephew John might like it. The Dean of Chester thinks it about one of the best things the author has produced."

Another of her letters about this time contains some pleasant home gossip. A baby niece is of course a principal topic:—"Mr. Wilson feels a great interest in her, poor little thing, and is never annoyed by any of her infantine screams or noises, which is more than I can say of him towards his own when of that age. This is a comfort to me, because I shall have true delight in having the little darling here

[1] Hartley Coleridge, son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, born 1796; died 1851.

as often as she is allowed to come; and you may well suppose that I am always anxious, when the pen is, as it *must* be, in Mr. Wilson's hand often, that he has nothing to disturb him." The mother's heart is shown in the following lines:—"Johnny is preparing for the University. As Mr. Wilson only expects and *exacts* common diligence from him, I do not fear he will do well." After mentioning the classes, she says:—"The three last-mentioned accomplishments (drawing, fencing, and dancing) are only recreations, but there is no harm in them; and I believe a greater blessing cannot befall a young man than to have every hour harmlessly if not usefully employed. You cannot think how much pleased I was with a letter Mr. W. received from Miss Watson the other day, speaking of the boys. I daresay it was flattering, but she has a way of saying things that appears as if they were not flattering. I would copy it now for you, but that I think you must be tired of the old mother's egotism. I have not mentioned the girls, but they are well. M. has two pupils, Jane and M. De Quincey, to whom she gives daily lessons in reading, writing, geography, grammar, and spelling; this occupies good part of the forenoon, and practising, mending old stockings, millinery, and such like, fill up some of the remaining hours of the day."

The four following letters from Allan Cunningham tell their own story:—

"27, Lower Belgrave Place,
11*th September* 1828.

"My dear Friend,—I have cut and cleared away right and left, and opened a space for your very beau-

tiful poem, and now it will appear at full length, as it rightly deserves. Will you have the goodness to say your will to the proof as quickly as possible, and let me have it again, for the printer pushes me sorely.

"You have indeed done me a great and lasting kindness; you have aided me, I trust effectually, in establishing my Annual Book,[1] and enabled me to create a little income for my family. My life has been one continued struggle to maintain my independence and support wife and children, and I have, when the labour of the day closed, endeavoured to use the little talent which my country allows me to possess as easily and as profitably as I can. The pen thus adds a little to the profit of the chisel, and I keep head above water, and on occasion take the middle of the causeway with an independent step.

"There is another matter about which I know not how to speak; and now I think on't I had better speak out bluntly at once. My means are but moderate; and having engaged to produce the literature of the volume for a certain sum, the variety of the articles has caused no small expenditure. I cannot, therefore, say that I can pay you for Edderline's Dream; but I beg you will allow me to lay twenty pounds aside by way of token or remembrance, to be paid in any way you may desire, into some friend's hand here, or remitted by post to Edinburgh. I am ashamed to offer so small a sum for a work which I admire so much; but what Burns said to the Muse, I may with equal propriety say to you—

[1] *The Anniversary.*

"'Ye ken—ye ken
That strong necessity supreme is
'Mang sons of men.'

"Now, may I venture to look to you for eight or ten pages for my next volume on the same kind of terms? I shall, with half-a-dozen assurances of the aid of the leading men of genius, be able to negotiate more effectually with the proprietor; for, when he sees that Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Mr. Southey, Mr. Lockhart, and one or two more, are resolved to support me, he will comprehend that the speculation will be profitable, and close with me accordingly. Do, I beg and entreat of you, agree to this, and say so when you write.

"Forgive all this forwardness and earnestness, and believe me to be your faithful servant and admirer,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"27, LOWER BELGRAVE PLACE,
"*November* 7, 1828.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—My little Annual—thanks to your exquisite Edderline, and your kind and seasonable words—has been very successful. It is not yet published, and cannot appear these eight days, yet we have sold 6000 copies. The booksellers all look kindly upon it; the proprietor is very much pleased with his success; and it is generally looked upon here as a work fairly rooted in public favour. The *first* large paper proof-copy ready shall be on its way to Gloucester Place before it is an hour finished. It is indeed outwardly a most splendid book.

"I must now speak of the future. The *Keepsake* people last season bought up some of my friends, and imagined, because they had succeeded with one or two eminent ones, that my book was crushed, and would not be anything like a rival. They were too wily for me; and though I shall never be able to meet them in their own way, still I must endeavour to gather all the friends round me that I can. I have been with our mutual friend Lockhart this morning, and we have made the following arrangement, which he permits me to mention to you, in the hope you will aid me on the same conditions. He has promised me a poem, and a piece of prose to the extent of from twenty to thirty pages, for £50, and engaged to write for no other annual. Now if you would help me on the same terms, and to the same extent, I shall consider myself fortunate. It is true you kindly promised to aid me with whatever I liked for next year, and desired me not to talk of money. My dear friend, we make money of you, and why not make some return? I beg you will therefore, letting bygones be bygones in money matters, join with Mr. Lockhart in this. I could give you many reasons for doing it, all of which would influence you. It is enough to say, that my rivals will come next year into the field, in all the strength of talent, and rank, and fashion, and strive to bear me down. The author of 'Edderline,' and many other things equally delightful, can prevent this, and to him I look for help.

"I shall try Wordsworth in the same way. I am sure of Southey and of Ed. Irving. I shall limit my

list of contributors, and make a better book generally than I have done. I am to have a painting from Wilkie, and one from Newton, and they will be more carefully engraved too.

"I am glad that your poem has met with such applause here. I have now seen all the other Annuals, and I assure you that in the best of them there is nothing that approaches in beauty to 'Edderline.' This seems to be the general opinion, and proud I am of it. —I remain, my dear friend, yours ever faithfully,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"27, BELGRAVE PLACE LOWER,
"*November* 19, 1828.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I send for your acceptance a large-paper copy of my Annual, with proofs of the plates, and I send it by the mail that you may have it on your table a few days before publication. You will be glad to hear that the book has been favourably received, and the general impression seems to be, that while the *Keepsake* is a little below expectation, the *Anniversary* is a little above it. I am told by one in whose judgment I can fully confide, that *our* poetry is superior, and "Edderline's Dream" the noblest poem in *any* of the annuals. This makes me happy; it puts us at the head of these publications.

"I took the liberty of writing a letter to you lately, and ventured to make you an offer, which I wish, in justice to my admiration of your talents, had been worthier of your merits. I hope and entreat you will think favourably of my request, and give me your aid, as powerfully as you can. If you but knew the opposi-

tion which I have to encounter, and could hear the high words of those who, with their exclusive poets, and their bands of bards, seek to bear me down, your own proud spirit and chivalrous feelings would send you [quickly] to my aid, and secure me from being put to shame by the highest of the island. One great poet, not a Scotch one, kindly advised me last season, to think no more of literary competition with the *Keepsake,* inasmuch as *he* dipt *his* pen exclusively for that publication. I know his poetic contributions, and fear them not when I think on 'Edderline.'

"I hope you will not think me vain, or a dreamer of unattainable things, when I express my hope of being able, through the aid of my friends, to maintain the reputation of my book against the fame of others, though they be aided by some who might have aided me. Should you decline—which I hope in God you will not—the offer which I lately made, I shall still depend upon your assistance, which you had the goodness to promise. Another such poem as 'Edderline' would make my fortune, and if I could obtain it by May or June it would be in excellent time.

"If you would wish a copy or two of the book to give away, I shall be happy to place them at your disposal. —I remain, my dear friend, your faithful servant,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"27, LOWER BELGRAVE PLACE,
"12*th December* 1828.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I enclose you some lines for your friend's paper, and am truly glad of any oppor-

tunity of obliging you. I like Mr. Bell's *Journal*[1] much. He understands, I see, what poetry is; a thing not common among critics. If there is anything else you wish me to do, say so. I have not the heart to refuse you anything.

"I was much pleased with your kind assurances respecting my next year's volume. Mr. Lockhart said he would write to you, and I hope you will unite with him and Irving in contributing for me alone. As I have been disappointed in Wordsworth, I hope you will allow me to add £25 of his £50 to the £50 I already promised. The other I intend for Mr. Lockhart. This, after all, looks like picking your pocket, for such is the rage for Annuals at present, that a poet so eminent as you are may command terms. I ought, perhaps, to be satisfied with the kind assurances you have given and not be over greedy.

"One word about Wordsworth. In his last letter to me, he said that Alaric Watts had a prior claim, 'Only,' quoth he, 'Watts says I go about depreciating other Annuals out of regard for the *Keepsake*. This is untrue. I only said, as the *Keepsake* paid poets best, it would be the best work.' This is not depreciating! He advised me, before he knew who were to be my contributors, not to think of rivalry in literature with the *Keepsake*. Enough of a little man and a great poet. His poetic sympathies are warm, but his heart, for any manly purpose, as cold as a December snail. I had to-day a very pleasant, witty contribution, from Theodore Hook.—I remain, my dear friend, yours faithfully,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

[1] *The Edinburgh Literary Gazette.*

"*P.S.*—I have got Mr. Bell's letter and Journals, and shall thank him for his good opinion by sending *him* a trifle some time soon for the paper. If you think my name will do the least good to the good cause, pray insert it at either end of the poem you like.—A. C."

The *Anniversary*, of which the editor wrote so anxiously, was not the only literary work this year that had requested the Professor's powerful aid. "Edderline's Dream," unfortunately, a fragment, some cantos having been lost in MS., was followed in the month of December by two beautiful little poems, one called "The Vale of Peace," the other "The Hare-Bells," written for *The Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, then edited by Mr. Henry Glassford Bell, whose abilities as a student in the Moral Philosophy class had attracted Professor Wilson's notice. He frequently visited at his house in Gloucester Place, and very soon evinced qualities more worthy of regard than a cultivated mind and a refined poetical taste. This acquaintanceship ripened into a friendship warm and sincere. Support in affairs of literature was not long a binding link; letters were forsaken for law, and, after a few years' practice in Edinburgh, Mr. Bell removed to Glasgow, having obtained a Sheriffship in that important city, where he has long enjoyed the respect due to an admirable judge, and an accomplished man of letters.

It has already been mentioned that my father had prepared sketches for the composition of various poems; why he did not follow further his original impulses in this direction has been matter of surprise. So strong a genius as his can hardly be supposed to have quite

missed its proper direction. Yet from the date of the publication of the "City of the Plague," up to 1829, there is no indication of his having seriously bent his mind to poetical composition. In the autumn of that year, at Elleray, he was again visited by the muse, and my mother thus mentions the fact to her sister :—

"Mr. W. has been in rather a poetical vein of late, and I rather think there will be a pretty long poem of his in the next number of *Blackwood*, entitled, "An Evening in Furness Abbey," or something of that kind. It will be too long for *you* to read, but perhaps Ann will do so, and tell you what it is about." From the publication of this beautiful poem, the tender domestic allusions in which would alone make it of peculiar interest and value in the eyes of the present writer,[1] down to 1837, when he composed his last poem, "Unimore," he did not again exercise his poetic faculty in the form of verse. Late in life, he thought much of a subject which he wished to shape into verse, "The Covenanters," but he said that he found in it insuperable difficulties.[2] "The Manse" was another subject he

[1] Contrasting his present experience with his early poetic dreams, he says :—

"Those days are gone,
And it has pleased high Heaven to crown my life
With such a load of happiness, that at times
My very soul is faint with bearing up the blessed burden." . . .

[2] He corresponded with Mr. Aird a good deal on this subject. His letters are too lengthy for insertion, but it is refreshing to find in them an occasional hearty outburst of indignation at the persecuting government of Charles and James. "Ought there not to be some savage splendid Covenanters introduced somewhere or other? Pray, consider with yourself how far they ever carried retaliation or retribution. I believe not far. Besides, under such accursed tyranny, bold risings up of men's fiercest and fellest passions were not wrong."

used to speak of, adding jocularly, "he was obliged to leave that, owing to the *Disruption*."[1]

How far we have got beyond the days when criticism of the Ettrick Shepherd required remonstrance to subdue it, may be gathered from the next letter, received during this holiday time at Elleray :—

"MOUNT BENGER, *August* 11, 1829.

"MY DEAR AND HONOURED JOHN,—I never thought you had been so unconscionable as to desire a sportsman on the 11th or even the 13th of August to leave Ettrick Forest for the bare scraggy hills of Westmoreland !—Ettrick Forest, where the black cocks and white cocks, brown cocks and grey cocks, ducks, plovers, and peaseweeps and whilly-whaups are as thick as the flocks that cover her mountains, and come to the hills of Westmoreland that can nourish nothing better than a castril or stonechat ! To leave the great yellow-fin of Yarrow, or the still larger grey-locher for the degenerate fry of Troutbeck, Esthwaite, or even Wastwater ! No, no, the request will not do ; it is an unreasonable one, and therefore not unlike yourself; for besides, what would become of Old North and Blackwood, and all our friends for game, were I to come to Elleray just now ? I know of no home of man where I could be so happy within doors with so many lovely and joyous faces around me; but this is not the season for in-door enjoyments ; they must be reaped on the wastes among the blooming heath, by the silver spring, or swathed in the delicious breeze of the wilderness. Elleray, with

[1] The split in the Church of Scotland in 1843.

all its sweets, could never have been my choice for a habitation, and perhaps you are the only Scottish gentleman who ever made such a choice, and still persists in maintaining it, in spite of every disadvantage. Happy days to you, and a safe return!—Yours most respectfully, JAMES HOGG."

The following letter, written about the same time, from my father to his friend Mr. Fleming, is unfortunately torn at the conclusion, but what remains of it is sufficiently interesting to be given :—

"MY DEAR FLEMING,—I much fear that it will not be possible for me to join your party on Tuesday, which I should regret under any circumstances, and more especially under the present, when you are kind enough to wish my presence more than usual. I have tried to arrange my proceedings, in twenty different ways, with the view of returning on Tuesday, but see not how I can effect my object. Mr. Benjamin Penny and his wife come to us to-morrow, and leave us on Friday. I cannot therefore go to Keswick till Saturday, and from Keswick I have to go to Buttermere and Cromack, and, if possible, Ennerdale and Wastwater. The artist who accompanies me, or rather whom I accompany, is unfortunately the most helpless of human beings, and incapable of finding his way alone among mountains for one single hour. I am, therefore, under the absolute necessity of guiding him every mile of the way, and were I to leave him he might as well be lying in his bed. His stay here is limited by his engagements in Edinburgh, and we shall have to return to Elleray

on Thursday, without having an opportunity of going again into Cumberland. Were I therefore to leave him on Tuesday, great part of my object in bringing him here would be defeated, and, indeed, even as it is, I have little hope of his achieving my purpose. He can neither walk nor ride, nor remember the name of the lake, village, vale, or house, and yet he is an excellent artist, though a most incapable man. I returned from a three days' tour with him on Saturday night, and would have immediately written to you, but expected to have called on you on Sunday evening, to tell you how matters stood. Mrs. Wilson, John, and one of the girls or indeed any part of the family you choose, will be with you on Tuesday; and if Tuesday be a bad day, so that Mr. Gibb cannot draw, and the distance be such as I can accomplish, I will exert some of my activity, a little impaired now, though not to any melancholy extent, and appear at Rayrig at five o'clock.

"It would have been pleasant had the three friends met, in a quiet way, at Rayrig; and I do not doubt that, in spite of all, we might have been even happy. But our meeting was prevented. Watson, I am sure, regretted it; and as for myself, I trust you will believe in the warmth and sincerity of my affection.

"With regard to the conversation of Calgarth about the Edinburgh murderers,[1] I had quite forgotten it, till the allusion to it in your kind letter recalled it to my memory. I do not believe that there is any difference

[1] Burke and Hare, who were tried in Edinburgh in 1829 for a series of murders perpetrated for the purpose of supplying the medical school with anatomical subjects.—See *Noctes*, vol. ii. pp. 185-190.

of opinion in our minds respecting those hideous transactions, that might not be reconciled in three minutes' uninterrupted conversation. But I never yet recollect a single conversation in a mixed company, on any subject on which some difference of opinion between two parties had been expressed or intimated, where it was not rendered impossible to reconcile it by the interposition of a third or fourth party taking up some point connected with, perhaps, but not essentially belonging to the point at issue. The argument, if there has been one, is thus broken in upon, new topics introduced, and, without tedious explanations, it is scarcely possible to get back to the real question. Something of this kind occurred, I remember, at Calgarth. Watson and Lord De Tabley joined in with certain remarks—right enough, perhaps, in their way—but such as involved and entangled the thread of our discourse. And thus you and I appeared, I am disposed to think, to have adopted different views of the matter; whereas, had we been left to ourselves, we should either have agreed, or at least had an opportunity of letting each other clearly understand what the point was on which we disagreed, and the grounds of that disagreement. In early life I fear that my studies were not such as habituated my mind to the very strictest and closest reasonings; nor perhaps is it the natural bent . . . ."

The artist, Mr. Gibb, whose incapacity in travelling is thus humorously described, was taken to Westmoreland by Professor Wilson, in order to make drawings for an intended work descriptive of lake scenery; a design, however, that came to an end, owing to an untimely

disaster that overtook the numerous illustrations that had been made.

A letter from so celebrated a man as Thomas Carlyle naturally awakens interest, to know how he and Professor Wilson regarded each other. The terms of affection expressed in this epistle would lead to a supposition that there had been an intimate intercourse between them. But either want of opportunity or other circumstances prevented the continuance of personal friendship. It seems that these two gifted men never met, at least not more than once again after their first introduction, which took place in the house of Mr. John Gordon, at one time a favourite pupil, and ever after a dearly-loved friend of my father.

"CRAIGENPUTTOCK, DUMFRIES,
19*th December* 1829.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your kind promise of a Christmas visit has not been forgotten here; and though we are not without misgivings as to its fulfilment, some hope also still lingers; at all events, if we must go unserved, it shall not be for want of wishing and audible asking. Come, then, if you would do us a high *favour*, that warm hearts may welcome in the cold New-Year, and the voice of poetry and philosophy, *numeris lege solutis*, may for once be heard in these deserts, where, since Noah's deluge, little but the whirring of heath-cocks and the lowing of oxen has broken the stillness. You shall have a warm fire, and a warm welcome; and we will talk in all dialects, concerning all things, climb to hill tops, and see certain of the kingdoms of this world, and at night gather round a clear hearth, and forget that

winter and the devil are so busy in our planet. There are seasons when one seems as if emancipated from the 'prison called life,' as if its bolts were broken, and the Russian ice-palace were changed into an open sunny *Tempe*, and man might love his brother without fraud or fear! A few such hours are scattered over our existence, otherwise it were too hard, and would make us too hard.

"But now descending to prose arrangements, or capabilities of arrangement, let me remind you how easy it is to be conveyed hither. There is a mail-coach nightly to Dumfries, and two stage-coaches every alternate day to Thornhill; from each of which places we are but fifteen miles distant, with a fair road, and plenty of vehicles from both. Could we have warning, we would send you down two horses; of wheel carriages (except carts and barrows) we are still unhappily destitute. Nay, in any case, the distance, for a stout Scottish man, is but a morning walk, and this is the loveliest December weather I can recollect of seeing. But we are at the Dumfries post-office every Wednesday and Saturday, and should rejoice to have the quadrupeds waiting for you either there or at Thornhill on any specified day. To Gordon, I purpose writing on Wednesday; but any way I know he will follow you, as Hesperus does the sun.

"I have not seen one *Blackwood*, or even an Edinburgh newspaper since I returned hither; so what you are doing in that unparalleled city is altogether a mystery to me. Scarcely have tidings of the *Scotsman-Mercury* duel reached me, and how the worthies failed to shoot each other, and the one has lost his editorship,

and the other still continues to edit.[1] Sir William Hamilton's paper on Cousin's Metaphysics I read last night; but, like Hogg's Fife warlock, 'my head whirled roun', and ane thing I couldna mind.' *O curas hominum!* I have some thoughts of beginning to *prophesy* next year, if I prosper; that seems the best style, could one strike into it rightly.

"Now, tell me if you will come, or if you absolutely refuse. At all events, remember me as long as you can in good-will and affection, as I will ever remember you. My wife sends you her kindest regards, and still hopes against hope that she shall wear her Goethe brooch this Christmas, a thing only done when there is a man of genius in the company.

"I must break off, for there is an Oxonian gigman coming to visit me in an hour, and I have many things to do. I heard him say the other night that in literary Scotland there was not one such other man as ——! —a thing in which, if —— would do himself any justice, I cordially agree.—Believe me always, my dear Sir, yours with affectionate esteem,

"THOMAS CARLYLE."

About this time I find another letter from Mr. Lockhart, referring to the contest for the University of Oxford in 1829, when Sir Robert Peel was unseated :—

[1] One of the pleasant little incidents of those agreeable times, when it was considered necessary that the editors of the *Scotsman* and the *Caledonian Mercury* should exchange shots to vindicate a fine-art criticism. The principals were Mr. Charles Maclaren and Dr. James Browne. The "hostile meeting" took place at seven o'clock in the morning, on the 12th November 1829.

"LONDON, 24, SUSSEX PLACE, REGENT'S PARK,
Sunday.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I am exceedingly anxious to hear from you, firstly about Landor, what you have done, or what I really may expect to count on, and *when?* You will see Blanco White's review ere this reaches you. I think it won't do, being full of coxcombry, and barren of information, and in all the lighter parts *mauvais genre.* It's, however, supported by all the Coplestons, Malthuses, etc.; and to satisfy ——, I must make an exertion, in which, as you love me, give me your effectual aid—for you can. I know you will.

"I take it for granted you have been applied to both for Peel and Inglis. What do you say on that score? I am as well pleased I don't happen to have a vote. To have one, would cost me near £100; more than I care for Peel, Inglis, and the Catholic Question, *tria juncta in uno.* The Duke now counts on forty majority in the Lords, but his cronies hint he begins to be sorry the opposition out of doors is so *weak,* as he had calculated on forcing, through the No Popery row, the Catholics to swallow a bill seasoned originally for the *gusto* of the Defender of the Faith.

"How are you all at home?—Ever yours,

"J. G. LOCKHART.

"*P.S.*—If you go to Oxon, come hither *imprimis,* and I will go with you."

The next letter is addressed to Mr. De Quincey, dated June 1829, and alludes to the "sketch of the Pro-

fessor," of which I have made partial use in a previous chapter :—

"*Sunday Evening, June* 1829.

"MY DEAR DE QUINCEY,—I had intended calling at the Nab to-morrow, to know whether or not you had left Edinburgh ; but from the *Literary Gazette*, received this morning, I perceive you are still in the Modern Athens. I wish, when you have determined on coming hitherwards, that you would let me have intimation thereof, as an excursion or two among the mountains, ere summer fades, would be pleasant, if practicable.

"Your sketch of the Professor has given us pleasure at Elleray. It has occurred to me that you may possibly allude, in the part which is to follow, to the circumstance of my having lost a great part of my original patrimony, as an antithesis to the word 'rich.' Were you to do so, I know it would be with your natural delicacy, and in a way flattering to my character. But the man to whom I owed that favour *died* about a fortnight ago, ——, and any allusion to it might seem to have been prompted by myself, and would excite angry and painful feelings. On that account I trouble you with this perhaps needless hint, that it would be better to pass it over *sub silentio*. Otherwise, I should have liked some allusion to it, as the loss, grievous to many minds, never hurt essentially the peace of mine, nor embittered my happiness.

"If you think the *Isle of Palms* and the *City of the Plague* original poems (in design), and unborrowed and unsuggested, I hope you will say so. The Plague has been often touched on and alluded to, but never, that I

know of, was made the subject of a poem, old Withers (the City Remembrancer) excepted, and some drivelling of Taylor the Water-Poet. Defoe's fictitious prose narrative I had never read, except an extract or two in Britton's *Beauties of England.* If you think me a good private character, do say so; and if in my house there be one who sheds a quiet light, perhaps a beautiful niche may be given to that clear luminary. Base brutes have libelled my personal character. Coming from you, the truth told, without reference to their malignity, will make me and others more happy than any kind expression you may use regarding my genius or talents. In the *Lights and Shadows, Margaret Lyndsay, The Foresters,* and many articles in *Blackwood* (such as Selby's 'Ornithology'[1]), I have wished to speak of humble life, and the elementary feelings of the human soul in isolation, under the light of a veil of poetry. Have I done so? Pathos, a sense of the beautiful, and humour, I think I possess. Do I? In the *City of the Plague* there ought to be something of the sublime. Is there? That you think too well of me, is most probably the case. So do not fear to speak whatever you think less flattering, for the opinion of such a man, being formed in kindness and affection, will gratify me far beyond the most boundless panegyric from anybody else. I feel that I am totally free from all jealousy, spite, envy, and uncharitableness. I am not so passionate in temper as you think. In comparison with yourself, I am the Prince of Peacefulness, for you are a nature of dreadful passions subdued by reason. I

[1] November 1826.

wish you would praise me as a lecturer on Moral Philosophy. That would do me good; and say that I am thoroughly logical and argumentative—for it is true; not a rhetorician, as fools aver. I think, with practice and opportunities, I would have been an orator. Am I a good critic? We are all well. I have been very ill with rheumatism.—God bless you, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours affectionately,

"J. W."

The friendship subsisting between Mr. De Quincey and my father has already been mentioned. From 1809, when he was his companion in pedestrian rambles and the sharer of his purse, till the hour of his death, that friendship remained unbroken, though sometimes, in his strange career, months or years would elapse without my father either seeing or hearing of him. If this singular man's life were written truthfully, no one would believe it, so strange the tale would seem. It may well be cause of regret that, by his own fatal indulgence, he had warped the original beauty of his nature. For fine sentiment and much tender kindliness of disposition gleamed through the dark mists which had gathered around him, and imperfectly permitted him to feel the virtue he so eloquently described. For the most part his habit of sympathy was such that it elevated the dark passions of life, investing them with an awful grandeur, destructive to the moral sense. Those beautiful writings of his captivate the mind, and would fain invite the reader to believe that the man they represent is De Quincey himself. But not even

in the "Autobiography" is his *personnel* to be found. He indeed knew how to analyse the human heart, through all its deep windings, but in return he offered no key of access to his own. In manner no man was more courteous and naturally dignified; the strange vicissitudes of his life had given him a presence of mind which never deserted him, even in positions the most trying. It was this quality that gave him, in combination with his remarkable powers of persuasion, command over all minds; the ignorant were silenced by awe, and the refined fascinated as by the spell of a serpent. The same faults in common men would have excited contempt; the same irregularities of life in ordinary mortals would have destroyed interest and affection, but with him patience was willing to be torn to tatters, and respect driven to the last verge. Still, Thomas De Quincey held the place his intellectual greatness had at first taken possession of. Wilson loved him to the last, and better than any man he understood him. In the expansiveness of his own heart, he made allowances for faults which experience taught him were the growth of circumstance. It may seem strange that men so opposite in character were allied to each other by the bonds of friendship; but I think that all experience shows that sympathy, not similarity, draws men to one another in that sacred relation.

I remember his coming to Gloucester Place one stormy night. He remained hour after hour, in vain expectation that the waters would assuage and the hurly-burly cease. There was nothing for it but that our visitor should remain all night. The Professor

ordered a room to be prepared for him, and they found each other such good company that this accidental detention was prolonged, without further difficulty, for the greater part of *a year*. During this visit some of his eccentricities did not escape observation. For example, he rarely appeared at the family meals, preferring to dine in his own room at his own hour, not unfrequently turning night into day. His tastes were very simple, though a little troublesome, at least to the servant who prepared his repast. Coffee, boiled rice and milk, and a piece of mutton from the loin, were the materials that invariably formed his diet. The cook, who had an audience with him daily, received her instructions in silent awe, quite overpowered by his manner; for, had he been addressing a duchess, he could scarcely have spoken with more deference. He would couch his request in such terms as these:—"Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system, and the possibility of any additional disarrangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise, so much so indeed as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than in a longitudinal form." The cook—a Scotchwoman—had great reverence for Mr. De Quincey as a man of genius; but, after one of these interviews, her patience was pretty well exhausted, and she would say, "Weel, I never heard the like o' that in a' my days; the bodie has an awfu' sicht o' words. If it had been my ain maister that was wanting his dinner, he would ha' ordered a hale tablefu'

wi' little mair than a waff o' his haun, and here's a' this claver aboot a bit mutton nae bigger than a prin. Mr. De Quinshey would mak' a gran' preacher, though I'm thinking a hantle o' the folk wouldna ken what he was driving at." Betty's observations were made with considerable self-satisfaction, as she considered her insight of Mr. De Quincey's character by no means slight, and many was the quaint remark she made, sometimes hitting upon a truth that entitled her to that shrewd sort of discrimination by no means uncommon in the humble ranks of Scottish life. But these little meals were not the only indulgences that, when not properly attended to, brought trouble to Mr. De Quincey. Regularity in doses of opium were even of greater consequence. An ounce of laudanum per diem prostrated animal life in the early part of the day. It was no unfrequent sight to find him in his room lying upon the rug in front of the fire, his head resting upon a book, with his arms crossed over his breast, plunged in profound slumber. For several hours he would lie in this state, until the effects of the torpor had passed away. The time when he was most brilliant was generally towards the early morning hours; and then, more than once, in order to show him off, my father arranged his supper parties so that, sitting till three or four in the morning, he brought Mr. De Quincey to that point at which in charm and power of conversation he was so truly wonderful.[1]

[1] Mr. De Quincey died at Edinburgh, December 8, 1859.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE—A CRUISE WITH THE EXPERIMENTAL SQUADRON.

1830–37.

IN 1830, we get some glimpses of home life in Gloucester Place, from my mother's letters to Miss Penny. She says, in reply to an invitation for her sons to Penny Bridge :—"The boys are transported with the idea of so much enjoyment, and I hope they will not be disappointed indeed. I do not think Mr. Professor can refuse them, but I have not yet had time to talk the matter over with him; for at the time the letter came he was particularly busy, and the day before yesterday, he and Johnny left us for a week to visit an old friend, Mr. Findlay, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, from whose house they mean to go and perambulate all the old haunts in and about Paisley, where Mr. W. spent his boyhood, and particularly to see the old minister Dr. M'Latchie, whom I daresay you have heard him mention often; he lived in his house for several years before he went to Glasgow College." My father really must have been "particularly busy" at this time, and his powers of working seem to me little short of miraculous; he had two articles in *Blackwood* in January; four in February;

three in March; one each in April and May; four in June; three in July; *seven* in August (or 116 pages); one in September; two in October; and one in November and December: being thirty articles in the year or 1200 columns. To give an idea of his versatility, I shall mention the titles of his articles in the Magazine for one month, viz., August:—"The Great Moray Floods;" "The Lay of the Desert;" "The Wild Garland, and Sacred Melodies;" "Wild-Fowl Shooting;" "Colman's Random Records;" "Clark on Climate;" "Noctes, No. 51." My mother, while all this literary work was going on, was too good a housewife to be able to spare time for more than the most notable works of the day. She, however, says jocularly to her correspondent: "I think I must give you a little literature, as I shine in that line prodigiously; I have read, with intense interest, as everybody must do, Moore's *Life of Lord Byron.* Mr. W. had a copy sent to him fortunately; for strange as it may appear, it is not to be had in the booksellers' shops here, and I suppose will not be till the small edition comes out."

In September and October, the Professor writes, from Penny Bridge and Elleray, the following letters to his wife:—

"PENNY BRIDGE, *Tuesday, September* 1830.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—We came here yesterday; and my intention was to take Maggy back to Elleray with me to-day, and thence in a few days to Edinburgh. But I find that that arrangement would not suit, and therefore have altered it. Our plans now are as follows:—We return in a body to Elleray (that is, I and

Maggy, and James Ferrier) this forenoon. There is a ball at Mrs. Edmund's (the Gale!) to-night, where we shall be. On Thursday, there is a grand public ball at Ambleside, where we shall be; and I shall keep Maggy at Elleray till Monday, when she and the boys will go in a body to Penny Bridge, and I return *alone* to Edinburgh.

"From your letters I see you are well; and I cannot deny Maggy the pleasure of the two balls; so remain on her account, which I hope will please you, and that you will be happy till and after my return. The session will begin soon, and I shall have enough to do before it comes on. Dearest Jane, be good and cheerful; and I hope all good will attend us all during the winter. Such weather never was seen as here! Thursday last was fixed for a regatta at Lowood. It was a dreadful day, and nothing occurred but a dinner-party of twenty-four, where I presided. On Friday, a sort of small regatta took place. A repast at three o'clock was attended by about seventy-five ladies and gentlemen, and the ball in the evening was, I believe, liked by the young people. The 'worstling' took place during two hours of rain and storm. The ring was a tarn. Robinson, the schoolmaster, threw Brunskil, and Irvine threw Robinson; but the last fall was made up between them, and gave no satisfaction. The good people here are all well and *kind*. Maggy has stood her various excursions well, and is fat. I think her also grown tall. She is a quarter of an inch taller than Mrs. Barlow. Colonel B—— lost his wife lately by elopement, but is in high spirits, and

all his conversation is about the fair sex. He is a pleasant man, I think, and I took a ride with him to Grasmere t'other day. The old fool waltzes very well, and is in love with Maggy. He dined with us at Elleray on Sunday. I have not seen the Watsons for a long time, but shall call on them to-morrow. The weather and the uncertainty of my motions have stood in the way of many things. I have constant toothache and rheumatism, but am tolerably well notwithstanding. Give my love to Molly and Umbs. Tell them both to be ready on my arrival, to help me in arranging my books and papers in the garrets and elsewhere. My dearest Jane, God bless you always.—Your affectionate husband, J. WILSON."

A few days later he writes :—

"ELLERAY, *Monday Afternoon, October* 1830.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—The ball at Ambleside went off with great *éclat*, Maggy being the chief belle. The Major is gone, and proved empty in the long-run. We all dined at Calgarth on Saturday,—a pleasant party. On Sunday, a Captain Alexander (who was in Persia) called on us, and we took him to the Hardens' to dinner. We were all there. To-day, Maggy and Johnny made calls on horseback, and we in the 'Gazelle.' We took farewell of the Watsons. Mr. Garnet dines with us at Elleray, and the boys at Lowood with the Cantabs. To-morrow they go to Penny Bridge, and J. Ferrier to Oxford, and I to Kendal. So expect me by the mail on Wednesday, to dinner, at five, if I get a place at

Carlisle. I found the Penny Bridge people were anxious, so I let the bairns go to them till after the Hunt ball; and no doubt they will be happy. Have all my newspapers from the 'Opossum' on Tuesday before I arrive. Tell Molly to get them in a heap. Have a fire in the front drawing-room and dining-room, and be a good girl on my arrival. Have a shirt, etc., aired for me, for I am a rheumatician; a fowl boiled. I got your kind letter yesterday. Love to Moll and Umbs. God bless you!—I am, your affectionate husband, JOHNNY WILSON."

"ELLERAY, *Monday*, 1830.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I had a letter this morning from Maggy, dated Saturday, Bangor Ferry, *all well*; and I suppose that she would write to you some day. She told me not of her plans, but I understand from Belfield, that the party are expected there on Thursday. I think I shall stay till she arrives. We dined at Penny Bridge on Thursday, having called at Hollow Oak, and found all the family at both places well.

"Miss Penny is looking very well. We returned that night to Elleray. On Friday, for the first time—no, for the second—we took a sail in the 'Gazelle,' the Thomsons' boat, for an hour or two, and then dined in a body at Lowood. On Saturday we rode (all five) to Grasmere, walked up Easdale—fell in with a man and his wife, or love-lady—Englishers apparently, named Brodie, who were anxious to see Langdale. We told them to join us, and all seven rode to the head of it, across by Blea-Tarn, and down little Langdale to Ambleside.

"It was a delightful day as to weather, and we enjoyed ourselves considerably.

"At Ambleside, where we arrived about half-past six, we dined in great strength. The Carr surgeon, the Costelloe ditto, John Harden, Fletcher Fleming, another person, I think, and ourselves five. I got home about twelve all steady. Sunday, that is yesterday, was one of the most complete things of the kind I remember to have seen; and I presume the floods in Morayshire were in high health and spirits. We lay on sofas all day. To-day, Monday, is stormy and showery, and I never left the dining-room great chair. Tell Mary to write to me the night she gets this, and that, I think, will be to-morrow, and I shall get it on *Thursday*. Write you on *Thursday night*, and I shall get it on Saturday, on which day I shall probably leave Elleray, but I will fix the day as soon as Maggy comes. I shall, on my arrival, have plenty to do to get ready for November 4th; so shall not most probably go to Chiefswood at all. Hartley Coleridge came here on Saturday, and is looking well and steady. He sends his kindest regards to you, Mary, and Umbs. Do you wish me to bring Maggy with me?—Yours most affectionately, J. WILSON.

"I got your kind letter duly this morning."

"DEAREST MOLL,—Write me a long letter, and on Wednesday night, if you have not time on Tuesday. Give my love to your Mamma and Umbs.—Your affectionate father, J. W."

Next year he paid another visit to Westmoreland, from which he writes to his wife :—

"PENNY BRIDGE, *Sunday, 26th Sept.* 1831.

"MY DEAR JANE,—I delayed visiting this place with Mary till I could leave Elleray, without interruption, for a couple of days. T. Hamilton stayed with us a fortnight, and, as he came a week later, and stayed a week longer than he intended, so has my return to Edinburgh been inevitably prevented. Mary and I came here on Thursday, since which hour it has never ceased raining one minute, nor has one of the family been out of doors. They are all well, including Mrs. and Miss Hervey, who have been staying about a month. It now threatens to be fair, and I purpose setting off by and by on foot to Elleray, a walk of fifteen miles, which perhaps may do me good; but if I feel tired at Newby Bridge, I will take a boat or chaise. Mary I leave at Penny Bridge for another week. The boys will join her here next Thursday, and remain till the Monday following, when they will all return to Windermere. On that Monday, Mary will go to Rayrig for two days or three, and either on Thursday or Friday arrive together in Edinburgh. I and Gibb will most probably be in Edinburgh on *Thursday first,* unless I find any business to detain me at Elleray for another day, on my return there to-night. If so, you will hear from me on *Wednesday.* As Mary wrote a long letter on Tuesday last, full, I presume, of news, I have nothing to communicate in that line. Birkbeck has been at Elleray for two or three days, and Johnny says he expects

Stoddart, who perhaps may be there on my return to-night. We all went to the Kendal ball, which the young people seemed to enjoy. Twenty-six went from Bowness, forming the majority of the rank and beauty. I hope you have been all quite well since I saw you, as all letters seem to indicate, and that I shall find you all well on my return. A severe winter lies before me, for I must lecture on Political Economy this Session, as well as Moral Philosophy; and that Magazine will also weigh heavy on me. I certainly cannot work as I once could, and feel easily wearied and worn down with long sitting; but what must be must, and toil I must, whatever be the consequence. The month before the Session opens will be of unspeakable importance to me, to relieve if possible my miserable appearance in College beginning of last Session. I wish to do my duty in that place at least, and change and exposure there are hard to bear, and of infinite loss to my interests. I feel great uneasiness and pain very often from the complaint I spoke of; but how else can I do what is necessary for me to do? Whatever be the consequence, and however severe the toil, I must labour this winter like a galley-slave; and since it is for us all, *in that at least*, I shall be doing what is at once right and difficult, and in itself deserving of commendation. If I fall through it, it shall only be with my life, or illness beyond my strength to bear up against. I hope Maggy's playing the guitar and singing frequently, and that Umbs is a good boy. Kindest love to them. I should like to have a few kind lines from you, written *on Monday*, the evening you receive this, and sent to post-office then. I

may, or rather *must* miss them, but if anything prevents it I shall conclude you are undoubtedly all well. You need not send any newspapers after receipt of this, but please to keep them together. Do not say anything about my motions to the Blackwoods, as I wish to be at home a day or two *incog.* I shall get my room done up when I arrive, which will save me trouble perhaps afterwards in looking out for papers. Mary is getting fat, and looks well, and the boys are all right.—I am, my dearest Jane, yours ever affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

Two days later he writes :—

"MY DEAR JANE,—I expect to be at home on Friday per mail, or 'Peveril,' to dinner. I purpose riding over to Penrith with Garnet on the ponies on Wednesday, and thence on, which saves me Kendal, a place abhorred. The family leave Elleray that day for Penny Bridge. I was so knocked up with my walk therefrom as to be stiff and lame yet. My walking day is over. The shrubs in the entrance are all well, but too tall, and want to be cut over. The myrtle is in excellent health and beauty, though it seems less.[1] Charlie[2] is in high glee and condition. The avenue is beautiful, and the gate pretty, the low walls being covered with ivy, and other odoriferous plants and parasites. The ponies and cows are all well-to-do, five of the former and two of the latter. Of the five former, one is an 'unter, and two are staigs. I called to-day at

[1] The myrtle was my mother's favourite plant.

[2] A spaniel belonging to my mother.

the Wood, and found all the Watsons well. I have frequently done so. I have not been in Ambleside since Hamilton left us; and we have seen nobody for a long time, it being supposed that I am gone, whereas I am just going. I wish no dinner on Friday, but a *foal*, as F. calls it. Mary is to write to you on Friday next, so you will hear of the boys a day later than by the Professor. Weir must have been a bore. I like Otter; Starky is in treaty for Brathay for nineteen years. He is seventy-two. Rover is pretty bobbish. Star is at Oldfield in high spirits, and neighs as often as we pass the farm. Love to Maggy and Umbs. I expect to find you all well, and if possible alone and in good humour on Friday, for I shall be very tired. Stoddart brought letters. I opened Mag's and yours, but not the other two, which being about eating had no charms.—Your affectionately, J. WILSON."

That the Magazine did weigh heavily upon him I do not wonder, as he had already written twenty articles during 1831, five of which were in the August number.

During this year, too, he commenced those noble critical essays on "Homer and his Translators,"[1] which scholars have remarked "contain the most vivid and genial criticisms in our own or any other language."[2] I believe deep thought and careful philosophical inquiry, combined with stirring vivacity, are nowhere

[1] The first appeared in April, followed by Numbers 2 and 3 in May and July. In August, a critique on the Agamemnon of Æschylus interrupted the essays, but they were resumed again in December, continued at intervals from 1832 to 1834, making in all seven papers.

[2] Gladstone's *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age.*

more attractively displayed than in these essays of my father. But not to the learned alone do they give delight, for my humble admiration makes me turn to them again and again.

The following letter from Mr. Sotheby relating to these papers, may come in here :—

"13, Lower Grosvenor Place, *October* 8, 1831.

"My dear Sir,—One month, two months, three months' grievous disappointment, intolerable disappointment, Homer and his tail, Chapman, Pope, and Sotheby in dim eclipse. What becomes of the promise solemnly given to the public, that the vases of good and evil impartially poured forth by your balancing hand, were ere Christmas to determine our fate? I long doubted whether I should trouble you with a letter, but the decided opinion of our friend Lockhart decided me. And now hear, I pray, in confidence, why I am peculiarly anxious for the completion of your admirable remarks.

"I propose, ere long, to publish the Odyssey, and shall gratify myself by sending you, as a specimen of it, the eleventh book. It will contain, *inter alia*, a sop for the critics, deeply soaked in the blood of a fair heifer and a sable ram, and among swarms of spirits, the images of the heroes of the Iliad, completing the tale of Troy divine. After the publication of the Odyssey, it is my intent, by the utmost diligence and labour, to correct the Iliad, and to endeavour to render it less unworthy of the praise you have been pleased to confer on it. Of your praise I am justly proud; yet for my future object, I am above

measure desirous of the benefit of your censures. The remarks (however flattering) with which I have been honoured by others, are less valuable to me than your censures; of this, the proof will be evident in the subsequent edition.

"You must not, you cannot leave your work incomplete. How resist the night expedition of Diomede and Ulysses?—Hector bursting the rampart—Juno and the Cestus—Hector rushing on, like the stalled horse snapping the cord—The death of Sarpedon—The consternation of the Trojans at the mere appearance of the armed Achilles—The Vulcanian armour—Achilles mourning over Patroclus—The conclusion of the twentieth book—The lamentations of Priam, and Hecuba, and, above all, of Andromache—Priam at the feet of Achilles—Andromache's lamentation, and Helen's (oh, that lovely Helen!) over the corse of Hector—can these and innumerable other passages be resisted by the poet of the 'City of the Plague?' No, no, no.

"In sooth, I must say, I had hope that at Christmas I might have collected, and printed for private distribution, or, far rather published, for public delight and benefit, with your express permission, the several critiques in one body, and then presented to the world a work of criticism unparalleled.

"I dine this day at Lockhart's, with my old and dear friend, Sir Walter. His health has improved since his arrival. Perhaps your cheeks may burn. I beg the favour of hearing from you.—I remain, my dear Sir, most sincerely yours, WM. SOTHEBY."[1]

[1] William Sotheby, born November 9, 1757; died December 30, 1833.

Miss Watson, the writer of the following letter, was a lady whose name can scarcely be permitted to pass without some notice. She was eldest daughter of the Bishop of Llandaff, and a woman of high mental attainments. When my father resided as a young man in Westmoreland, she was then in the flower of her age, and in constant communion with the bright spirits who at that time made the Lake country so celebrated. Mr. De Quincey, in writing of Charles Lloyd, and mentioning Miss Watson as his friend, says, she "was an accomplished student in that very department of literature which he most cultivated, namely, all that class of work which deal in the analysis of human passions. That they corresponded in French, that the letters on both sides were full of spirit and originality." Miss Watson's life, with all the advantages which arise from a highly-endowed nature, was but a sad one, for her temperament was habitually melancholy, and her health delicate. She has long since found repose. The speech which she alludes to in her letter, was one made by Professor Wilson at a public meeting which had been projected by a number of individuals, to give vent to their sentiments upon the effect of the reform measures in the contemplation of Government:—

"*December* 3, 1831.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I suppose it is to yourself I owe the Edinburgh papers containing your own eloquent and elegant speech. Many thanks; I admire it much. If you were not born a prince you deserve to be one. Mr. Bolton was here when I was reading it, and he said, 'I do assure you, Miss Watson, that Mr. Canning

never made a finer speech, and I shall drink the Professor's health in a bumper to-day.' I really am not capable of understanding what Englishmen mean by all this nonsense. We are like the Bourbons, of whom it may be said, 'that they had learnt nothing by the French Revolution.' Is it possible that the system of equality (at which a child of five years old might laugh) can still delude the minds of men now? I have no news worth sending; all is quiet. The cholera frightens no one. We laugh at it as a good joke! God help our merry hearts! there is something ludicrous in it, I suppose, which I can't find out. Blackwood sent me *Robert of Paris*, etc., which I am very much pleased to have. I have not begun it yet; indeed, I am not well, nor would have sent you so dull a letter, but that I could not delay saying how much I was gratified by the papers.—Ever believe me yours affectionately,

"D. WATSON.

"Kind remembrances to Mrs. Wilson and Margaret. It is bitter, bitter cold in this pretty house. As for you and the Shepherd (to whom I would send my thanks for the most gratifying letter I ever received, but that it is rather too late in the day), I advise you both to shut yourselves up in Ambrose's for a month to come, and keep clear of all the nonsense that will be going on in the shape of Reform; and every night put down your conversation, and let me see it in *Blackwood*. You shall be two philosophers enchanted like Durandarte, and not to be disenchanted till all is over. Truly I do think you eat too many oysters! How much I do like

those 'Noctes.' Write one, and let it be a good one. Wordsworth says 'that the booksellers are all aghast! and that another *dark* age is coming on.' I think he is not far wrong. He is a wonderful creature when he will deign to be what nature made him, not artificial society. He read one of his poems to me. The subject was some gold-fish, but the latter stanzas were magnificent! Oh, what a pity it is to see so noble a creature condescending to be the ass of La Fontaine's Fable! Adieu! I have written beyond my power of hand. I would rather far listen to you than write to you. I cannot now make up a letter, but my heart is still the same. It was the only talent I ever possessed in this world. It *must* be hid under a bushel. How is Mrs. Hamilton? I am ashamed to send such a scrawl, but indeed I am very poorly, as the old nurses say."

The following passages from the Professor's oration, which, on referring to the papers, I see was *the* speech of the day, are worth reproducing. He said, among other good things, that "Often have I heard it said, and have my eyes loathed to see it written, that we of the great Conservative party are enemies of education, and have no love for what are called the lower orders—orders who, when their duties are nobly performed, are, in my humble estimation, as high as that in which any human being can stand. I repel the calumny. I myself belong to no high family. I had no patronage beyond what my own honourable character gave me. I have slept in the cottages of hundreds of the poor. I have sat by the cottar's ingle on the Saturday night, and seen the grey-haired patriarch with pleasure unfold the

sacred page—the solace of his humble but honourable life. I have even faintly tried to shadow forth the lights and shades of their character; and it is said I belong to that class who hate and despise the people. . . . Must I allow my understanding to be stormed by such arguments as that the chief business of poor men is to attend to politics, or their best happiness to be found in elections? I know far better that he has duties imposed on him by nature, and, if his heart is right and his head clear, while he is not indifferent to such subjects, there are a hundred other duties he must perform far more important; he may be reading ONE BOOK, which tells him in what happiness consists, but to which I have seen but few allusions made by the reformers in modern times. In reading those weather-stained pages, on which, perhaps, the sun of heaven had looked bright while they had been unfolded of old on the hill-side by his forefathers of the Covenant, when, environed with peril and death, he is taught at once religion towards his Maker, and not to forget the love and duty he owes to mankind, to prefer deeper interests, because everlasting, to those little turbulances which now agitate the surface of society, but which, I hope, will soon subside into a calm, and leave the country peaceful as before."[1]

I fear, however, his political opponents, in that time of madness, did not look upon his words with the same loving eyes as his amiable correspondent, as I see in a letter of my father's at this time a reference to a rhyming criticism of the Conservative proceedings any-

[1] *Edinburgh Advertiser*, Nov. 29, 1831.

thing but flattering, from which I give two lines as a specimen—

> "The Professor got up and spoke of sobriety,
> Religion, the Bible, and moral propriety."

"I need not point out to your disgust," parenthetically observes the Professor to a friend, "the insinuations conveyed in that wretched doggrel, nor express my own that they could have been published by a man who has frequently had the honour of sitting at my table, and of witnessing my character in the domestic circle."

In this excited period I find ladies writing strongly on political matters. For example, even the gentle spirit of my mother is roused. She says to my aunt:—"I hope you are as much disgusted and grieved as we all are with the passing of this accursed Reform Bill. I never look into a newspaper now; but we shall see what they will make of it by and by."

Among my father's contributions to the Magazine this year, there appeared in the May number an article which attracted considerable attention. It was a review of Mr. Tennyson's Poems,[1] the first edition of which had appeared two years previously. The critique was severe, yet kindly and discriminating. The writer remarking good-humouredly at its close, "In correcting it for the press, we see that its whole merit, which is great, consists in the extracts, which are 'beautiful exceedingly.' Perhaps in the first part of our article we may have exaggerated Mr. Tennyson's not unfrequent silliness, for we are apt to be carried away by the whim

[1] *Poems, chiefly Lyrical.* By Alfred Tennyson. London: E. Wilson. 1830.

of the moment, and, in our humorous moods, many things wear a queer look to our aged eyes which fill young pupils with tears; but we feel assured that in the second part we have not exaggerated his strength, and that we have done no more than justice to his fine faculties." It says much for the critic's discriminating power that he truly foretold of the future Laureate, that the day would come when, beneath sun and shower, his genius would grow up and expand into a stately tree, embowering a solemn shade within its wide circumference, and that millions would confirm his judgment "that Alfred Tennyson is a poet." The young poet, although evidently nettled,[1] received the criticism in good part, and profited by it. On reading the paper once more, I observe that, with scarcely a single exception, the verses condemned by the critic were omitted or altered in after editions.[2]

[1] In the edition of his poems published in 1833 the following somewhat puerile lines appeared, which I quote as a literary curiosity: —

"TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

"You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame with praise,
Rusty Christopher:
When I learned from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher."

[2] "The National Song;" "English War Song;" "We are Free;" "Love, Pride, and Forgetfulness;" Sonnet, "Shall the hag Evil," etc.; "The 'How' and the 'Why;'" "The Kraken," etc. etc., are all consigned to oblivion, or to our acquisitive brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, who may have preserved these youthful effusions in the American editions.

In June 1832, my mother writes :—"Mr. Wilson has long and earnestly wished to have a cruise with the experimental squadron, which I believe will sail by the end of this month; but unfortunately he was late in applying to Sir P. Malcolm."

In July he left home for the purpose of joining the squadron, and the result of his naval experience will be found in the following communications sent from time to time to Mrs. Wilson :—

"UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
Wednesday, July 11, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I have received your favour of last Saturday, and rejoice to find that you are all well, and in as good spirits as can be expected during my absence. Had I known what bustle and botheration I should be exposed to, I hardly think I should have left Edinburgh. Every day gives a different account of the movement of the squadron. The 'Vernon,' who is at Woolwich, was to have dropt down to-day to Sheerness, but it is put off till Friday, and even that is uncertain. She has then to get all her guns and powder on board, and her sails set, and other things, which will take some days, I guess; and this morning it is said the squadron are to meet at Plymouth. All this keeps me in a quandary, and I have not been able to see Sir F. Collier, the captain of the 'Vernon,' but possibly shall to-morrow. Since I wrote I have been again at Woolwich, and seen the officers of the 'Vernon.' They were at first rather alarmed at the idea of a professor, and wondered what the deuce he wanted on board. I understand that they are now

in better humour; but the truth is, that *pride* is the leading article in the character of all sailors on their own ship; and I am told these dons are determined to take nobody else but myself. Captain Hope (not the President's son) and Andrew Hay were with me at Woolwich, and there we picked up Captain Gray[1] of the Marines (you will remember his singing), who dined with us at Greenwich. I see Blair every day, and pass my time chiefly with *offishers*, the United Service Club being close at hand. The literary people here seem Cockneys. I called yesterday on Miss Landon, who is really a pleasant girl, and seemed much flattered by the old fellow's visit. To-day Blair and I, along with Edward Moxon (bookseller), take coach for Enfield (at three o'clock), to visit Charles Lamb. We return at night, if there are coaches. On Thursday, I intend going to the Thomsons' down the river, and shall call again on my way on the 'Vernon,' to see what is doing. Meanwhile, you will get this letter on *Friday, and be sure it is answered that evening, and sent to the General Post-Office.* I shall thus hear from you on Monday, and shall then (if not off) have to tell you all our future intentions. Meanwhile it is reported that *the cholera is on board the 'Vernon.'* If so, I shall not go, but proceed to the Tyne. But say nothing of this to anybody. Yesterday I visited Kensington Gardens with Captain Hope, but saw nobody like Maggy, Mary, Umbs, and yourself. I met there Lord Haddington, and am to dine with him, if I can, before sailing; but I hope we shall be at rendezvous by

[1] Charles Gray, see vol. i. p. 201.

Monday night. Tell Maggy to give me all news, and if you have heard again from Johnny. I will send you in my next my direction when we set sail; and I am not without hopes the squadron may land me in Scotland. Some say there will be *fighting*, and that the 'Vernon' will lead the van, being, though a frigate, as powerful as a line-of-battle ship. I will write to Ebony about money for the house after I hear from Maggy, and hope you will go on pretty well till I return. Tell Maggy to be civil to BOB, and he will be my banker for small sums. I will also send a receipt, which you will get on the *6th of August for £30 odd;* but I will explain how in my next.

"Take good care of all yourselves, and be good boys and girls. Love to Mag, Moll, and Umbs. As for *Blair, he* cuts me so up that I fear to send him even my compliments. I am glad to hear of Moll's voice being high. Keep Mag to the *guitar* and new songs.—Yours ever affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

The next is to his daughter Mary:—

"UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
July 16, 1832.

"MY DEAR MARY,—I have received your kind epistle, and am rather pleased to find you all well. I write these few lines in a great hurry, to tell you to *wrap up in a parcel, two silver soup-spoons, two tea-spoons, and two silver forks*, and direct them to me at Union Hotel, Charing Cross, per mail, without delay. *See them booked at the office.* Young ladies take such things to school,

and young gentlemen, it seems, to sea. See that the direction is distinct. Write to me by the same post, or if anything prevent, by the one following; but direct my letter, care of Captain Tatnal, No. 5, Park Terrace, Greenwich. I have just time to say God bless you all, but in a few days will write a long letter telling you of our intended motions, as we hope to be off by the 26th. Don't believe anything about the 'Vernon' in any newspaper. Be good girls and boys till my return, and do not all forget your old Dad. Love to mamma, and tell me if you have heard farther from Johnny.—Thy affectionate father, J. WILSON."

TO MRS. WILSON.

"No. 2, PARK TERRACE, GREENWICH,
Friday.

"MA BONNE CITOYENNE,—I am now fairly established here in lodgings, that is, in a room looking into Greenwich Park, with liberty to take my meals in a parlour belonging to the family. The master thereof is a Frenchman, and a Professor of Languages, and the house swarms with frogs, that is, children. I pay fourteen shillings a week for lodging, which is a salutary change from the hotel. I dine with Tatnal or Williams, or at a shilling ordinary, and hope to be able to pay my bill to Monsieur Gallois when I take my departure. I walk to Woolwich daily (three miles), and board the 'Vernon,' who now assumes a seaward *seeming*. Her gun-carriages are on board, but not the guns themselves, which are to be taken in at Sheerness. I have seen Sir F. Collier, who behaves civilly, but he

cannot comprehend what I want on board the 'Vernon,' neither can I. Her destination is still unknown, but she is to have marines and artillerymen on board, which smells of fighting. But with whom are we to fight? My own opinion is, that we are going to cruise off Ireland, and to land troops at Cork. Williams thinks we are going to Madeira, to look after an American frigate, and Tatnal talks of the Greek Islands. Meanwhile, Sir P. Malcolm, I hear, is enraged at being kept tossing about in the 'Donegal,' without knowing why or wherefore; and nobody knows where the 'Orestes' has gone. The 'Tyne' sails to-morrow for Plymouth. The 'Vernon,' it is thought, cannot be off before the 27th, so that there will be time to write me again before I go to sea. You will get this on Monday morning, and I hope some of you will answer it that night. Direct it to me at Captain Tatnal's, No. 5, Park Terrace, Greenwich, in case I should be off. If our destination be merely Ireland, there is every probability of our touching at some Scotch port. I have been several times at Sir Henry Blackwood's, in Regent Park; pleasant family, and fashionable. I forgot if I mentioned that I went to the Opera, singing and dancing, and *tout-ensemble* beautiful. A Miss Doyle (a Paddy about thirty-five), at Sir H. B.'s, plays the harp ten times better than Taylor. She is held to be the finest harpist we have. Miss Blackwood is very pretty, and clever. I go up to town to-day to dine with Mrs. Burke, and to-morrow a party of us eat white-bait at the 'Crown and Sceptre' here. Besides the 'Vernon,' there are lying at Woolwich two new gun-brigs, also

built by Symonds, called the 'Snake' and the 'Serpent.' They go with us to compete with the 'Orestes.' The squadron, therefore, at first, will consist of the 'Donegal,' 84, the 'Vernon,' 50, the 'Castor,' 44, the 'Tyne,' 28, the 'Orestes,' 'Serpent,' and 'Snake,' 18; and we expect to be joined by the 'Britannia' and 'Caledonia,' 120; but that is uncertain. The hatred felt for the 'Vernon' is wide and deep, and all the old fogies predict she will capsize in a squall. This is all owing to her incomparable beauty. You have just to imagine the 'Endeavour' magnified, and you see her hull, only she is sharper. She is very wide in proportion to her length, and also deep; so the devil himself will not be able to upset or sink her. She has the masts and spars of a 74, and yet they seem light as lady-fern. I am sorry, however, to say, that there have been twelve cases of cholera on board, and three deaths. The disease, however, is now over, and I have no doubt arose from the dreadful heat of the weather acting on the new paint. She is now dry as a whistle, and the crew is the finest ever seen. I hope you will get up a long letter among you in reply to this, and I shall be expecting it anxiously as the last I can receive for some time. I will write again before one o'clock, sending you my direction, and also a receipt, which will enable you to get some money, I think, on the 6th of August. Be sure to tell me of Johnny, and when he returns I hope he will write me an account of his route and his exploits. Blair, too, might write me a letter, I think. Kindest love to them all. Keep Maggie at her music, and tell me how Molly is getting on with Miss Paton.

Perhaps Umbs has a voice! Tell her to try. Compliments to Rover.[1] God bless you all, and believe me, dearest Jane, yours ever most affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

"SHEERNESS, *August* 4, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I have delayed writing to you from day to day, in hourly expectation of being able to tell you something decisive of our mysterious motions, but am still in ignorance. In a few days you may expect another and very long epistle; but I write now just to say that we are weighing anchor from Sheerness for the Nore, and that to-morrow we set sail down the Channel, either for Cork or Madeira, or somewhere else, for nobody knows where. I never knew what *noise* was, till I got on board the 'Vernon.' But all goes on well; the particulars in my next. I enclose you a five-pound note just to pay the postage. I cannot get on shore, else I would send a stamp for some money due to me on the 6th. But I will send it first port we touch on. Meanwhile Maggy must, when necessary, get a small supply from Bob.

"You will not think this short letter unkind, for we are ordered off in half an hour. You may depend on my next being rather amusing.

"I shall be most anxious to hear from you, and of you all, immediately. You are all at leisure, and must get up a long joint letter, telling me of everything. Get a long sheet from Ebony, and cross it all over. Enclose it (directed to me in H.M.S. 'Vernon') to Mr. Barrow, Admiralty, and he will transmit it duly. Do

[1] One of the dogs.

not lose time. God bless you all, one and all, and believe me, my dearest Jane, ever yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

"—— 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I wrote to you a few days ago from Sheerness, and now seize another hour to inform of our motions since I wrote from London. I found my lodgings at Greenwich very comfortable, but experienced almost as many interruptions there as in town. I dined with Charles Burney one day, and found the family the kindest of the kind, and pleasant. I forget if I told you that the Literary Union gave me a dinner, with T. Campbell in the chair. At last, after many a weary delay, the 'Vernon' left Woolwich on *Sunday, 29th July,* in tow of two steam-boats, which took her to the Nore. On Monday 30th, she was taken into dock at Sheerness, and then, after some repairs in her copper, anchored within cable-length of the 'Ocean,' of 100 guns. Some of us amused ourselves with walking about the place; but it is somewhat dullish, though the docks, etc., are splendid. On *Tuesday* 31*st,* we took our guns on board, fifty 32-pounders, the method of doing which was interesting to me who had never seen it before; and then lunched with the officers of the 'Ocean,' and inspected that magnificent ship 'The Flag Ship,'—Admiral Sir. J. Beresford. I dined with the Admiral in his house on shore, and met a pleasant party of males and females. We had music and dancing, and the family proved agreeable and amiable. At midnight we reached the 'Vernon,' all tolerably steady,

that is to say, Mr. Massey, the first lieutenant, the captain, and myself.

"On *Wednesday*, 1*st* of August, I breakfasted with the officers of the 'Ocean,' and Lieutenant Carey (brother of Lord Falkland) took me in his cutter to Chatham, during which sail we saw about a hundred ships of war, of the line and frigates, all moored like models along both shores. The chaplain (Falls) and I then inspected Chatham and Rochester, and walked to Maidstone, where were the assizes; so we proceeded to a village wayside inn, where we slept comfortably. This walk gave us a view of the Vale of Alesford and the richest parts of Kent.

"On *Thursday* 2*d*, we returned to the 'Vernon,' through a woody and hedgy country, and the hottest of days, and in the afternoon saw the powder taken aboard. The officers of the 96th gave me a dinner at the barracks, and a jovial night we had of it. On rowing back to the ship, one of our lieutenants fell overboard, but we picked him up without loss of time, and had him resuscitated. On *Friday* 3*d*, I called on the Admiral, and chatted with his three daughters, about the corresponding ages of your three—pretty, and well brought up, elegant, and without *hauteur*. They have no mother, but an aunt lives with the Admiral, who is a kind-hearted soul as ever lived. I also called on Captain Chambers, captain of the 'Ocean,' who lives on shore, and chatted with his daughters, three in number, and agreeable,—eldest pretty and rather literary—good people all. I also called on Mr. Warden, surgeon, who used to live in Ann Street. I

found him and his wife and family snugly situated in a good house, and civil to a degree. I dined on board the 'Ocean:' officers of that ship delightful fellows, and overwhelmed me with kindness.

"*Saturday the 4th.*—The 'Snake' gun-brig from Woolwich appeared in the offing going down the river, and the 'Ocean' saluted her with twelve guns. At mid-day the 'Vernon' manned her yards, a beautiful sight, while we received the Admiral. I lunched on board the 'Ocean,' and dined in the 'Vernon,' having inspected all the docks and the model-room, and seen Sheerness completely. In the evening we were towed out to the Nore. *On Sunday the 5th,* we weighed anchor by daylight, and the 'Vernon' for the first time expanded her wings in flight. She was accompanied by the Duke of Portland's celebrated yacht the 'Clown,' whom she beat going before the wind, but we had no other kind of trial till we cast anchor off the Sark in the 'Swin' off Norwich. *Monday the 6th.*—Weighed anchor at day-light with a fine breeze, and went into the Downs. Off Ramsgate, were joined by the 'Snake' and 'Pantaloon' gun-brigs, the latter the best sailer of her size ever known. It came on to blow fresh, and for several hours we tried it on upon a wind, having been joined by a number of cutters. The 'Vernon' rather beat the rest, but in my opinion not very far, the 'Pantaloon' sticking to her like wax. But our sails are not yet stretched, and the opinion on board is, that she will, in another week or so, beat all opponents. The day was fine, and the sight beautiful, as we cruised along the white cliffs of Dover, and then well over to-

wards the French coast. At sunset we returned before the wind to the Downs, and the squadron ('Vernon,' 'Snake,' 'Pantaloon,' and 'Clown') cast anchor off Deal, surrounded by a great number of vessels.

"*Tuesday the 7th.*—The squadron left their anchorage before Deal about twelve o'clock, with a strong breeze; the 'Clown' and 'Pantaloon' being to windward of the 'Vernon,' and the 'Snake' rather to leeward. This position was retained for nearly two hours, when the 'Snake' dropped considerably astern, and the 'Vernon' weathered the 'Pantaloon,' the 'Clown' still keeping to windward and crossing our bows. At this juncture it blew hard, and I went down with Collier and Symonds to dinner in their cabin. The 'Vernon' was now left in charge of the first lieutenant, and in tacking missed stays. The 'Snake' and 'Pantaloon' immediately went to windward, and we were last of all. It still blew very fresh, and in about two hours we again headed the squadron, all but the 'Clown,' who continued first all along. Towards sunset the wind came off the land, where the 'Snake' and 'Pantaloon' were, and brought them to windward of us about two miles, and so ended the day's trial, with alternate success. The 'Snake' and 'Pantaloon' then came down by signal under the 'Vernon's' stern, and we continued all night in company under easy sail, the wind having slackened, and the moon being clear and bright.

"*Wednesday 8th.*—At seven o'clock found ourselves off Beachy Head with the 'Clown' a long way to leeward, the 'Snake' to windward, and the 'Pantaloon'

in our wake. The wind had shifted during the night, and we had the advantage of it. But towards morning it had fallen, and we made but two knots an hour. The calm continued during the day, and we made but little way. Early in the afternoon a miserable accident occurred. The crew were up aloft lowering the main top-gallant yard. It is a spar about seventy feet long, and about sixty feet above the deck. As it was coming down, a man slid along it to release a rope from a block, when, by some mistake, the men above cut the rope he was holding by, and in sight of us all he descended with great velocity, clinging to the spar till he came to the end of it, and then with outstretched arms fell about forty feet upon the deck, within three yards of where I was standing. The crash was dreadful, and he was instantly carried below, affairs going on just as if he had been a spider. It was found that his right arm was shattered to pieces, and his whole frame shook fatally. He continued composed and sensible for three hours, when he began to moan wofully, and in half an hour expired. He was a Scotsman of the name of Murray, one of the best men in the ship, and brother, it is said, of a clergyman. No doubt many felt for him, but the noise, laughter, swearing, and singing, went on during all the time he was dying.

"*Thursday 9th.*—The ship has been making considerable way during the night, and at eight o'clock we are off the Isle of Wight; 'Snake' and 'Pantaloon' about two miles behind, all three going before the wind. The dead man is lying on the gun-deck, sepa-

rated from where I now sit by a thin partition. The body is wrapped in flags, and the walls at his head and back are hung with cutlasses and the muskets of the marines. His weatherbeaten face is calm and smiling, and 'after life's fitful fever he sleeps well.' The night before, he was one of the most active in a jig danced to the fifes. The wind is freshening, and we expect to be off Plymouth (120 miles) by midnight. We have sprung one of our yards, and the fore-mast seems shaken, so we shall put into Plymouth to refit, and probably remain there *three* days. It is not unlikely that the Admiral (Malcolm) may join us there. If not, we shall sail for Cork (distant 300 miles), and then, perhaps, the experimental squadron will begin its career. We have no more fear of fighting, neither do we know where we may be going, but my own opinion is that we shall cruise in the Channel. I do not see that I can be at home sooner than a month at the soonest, as all that I came to see remains yet to be seen. I am not without hopes of getting a letter from you before we leave Plymouth. I meet with all kindness from everybody, and am pleased with the on-goings of a sea-life, though the bustle and disturbance is greater than I had imagined, and the noise incessant and beyond all description. But my appetite is good, and I am never heard to utter a complaint. All day wind light, but towards evening it freshened, and at seven we committed the body of the poor sailor to the deep. The funeral ceremony was most impressive. Before nightfall the 'Snake' came up with a fresh breeze, and we had another contest, in which the 'Vernon' was fairly beaten.

In smooth water and moderate winds the 'Snake' is at present her master, much to my surprise; when it blows hard we are superior. *Friday* 10*th.*—This morning at four we entered Plymouth. The country around is very beautiful, and young Captain Blackwood and I are proposing to go on shore. How long we remain here seems uncertain. I hope it may not be above a day or two.

"Captain Blackwood and self have been perambulating Plymouth, and intend to dine at the hotel thereof.

"I have written a tolerably long letter. God bless you all, and true it is that I think of you every hour, and hope you now and then think of me too. Kindest love to all the progeny, John, Mag, Moll, Blair, and Umbs, and believe me yours most affectionately,

"J. WILSON.

"Write to me again on receipt of this, and enclose as before to Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty. The enclosed signature of my name, Johnny will give to Robert Blackwood, who will get my half-year's salary from the City Chamberlain, which you will get from the said Bob. Send £10 to Elleray, and account to me for the rest of the enormous sum.[1] I enclosed £5 in my last from Sheerness. Once more love to yourself and to children, and farewell. I will write from Cork.—Yours, J. W."

"PLYMOUTH, *August* 23*d.*

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I have, as you know, received

[1] The Professor's "salary" was £72, 4s. 4d. per annum.

your first long united epistle, and answered it in a hurried letter, telling you to write to me direct to Plymouth. Before that I wrote a long journal letter enclosing my signature for a receipt, which no doubt you have received. To wait for the post of that era (the day after my long letter, August 10), I went up the Tamar with Captain Blackwood, and after an excursion of three days returned to Plymouth. On Tuesday the 14th I dined on board the 'Malta,' Captain Clavell, with a large party, and that evening went aboard the 'Campeadora' schooner, a pleasure-yacht belonging to Mr. Williamson, from Liverpool (nephew to old Shaw thereof, who, I understand, was a rich and well-bred personage), and sailed with him to Portsmouth, distant from Plymouth 150 miles. I passed two days at Portsmouth viewing all the great works there; and returned to Plymouth on Saturday the 17th, by a steamer; a most stormy passage. Saturday and Sunday I dined on board the 'Vernon;' and on the Sunday I wrote to you the hurried letter above alluded to. On Monday the 19th, I dined with Mr. Roberts, the master ship-builder of the docks, and met some naval and military officers. Tuesday the 20th was an a'-day's rain, and I kept all day in a lodging-room with Captain Williams, R.N., and his brother, the purser of the 'Vernon.' Wednesday the 21st was a fine day, but I went nowhere, except on board a few ships; and it being electioneering time here, I heard some speeches from Sir Edward Codrington and others. I dined with a party of *offishers* at the hotel. To-day (Thursday the 22d) I saw Sir F. Collier, who informed me that the squadron of Sir P. Malcolm,

consisting of seven sail, were in the offing, and that the 'Vernon' is to join them to-morrow at 12 A.M. We are consequently all in a bustle; and my next letter will be from the first port we put into. This is the night of the said Thursday; I am on shore writing this. I hope that a letter from you will reach us to-morrow before we sail, though I *fear* not, because Mr. Barrow is at Portsmouth, and that may have delayed your letter. The letter which you were to write *direct* according to former instructions, to Plymouth, will be sent after us ere long. On receiving this please to write to me, *directed to me under cover to Mr. Barrow, Admiralty*, and it will be forwarded with the Admiral's letters. *The cruise* begins *to-morrow*, and two months have been spent, as you will see, in another way. I shall take two or three weeks of the cruise, as it would be stupid to return without seeing the experimental squadron. I shall write to you by the first steamer or tender that takes letters from the squadron. I do not think we are going very far. Several balls and concerts were about to be given to us, but our orders have come at last rather unexpectedly, and all the ladies are in tears. I forgot to say that, on Monday the 13th, I dined, not on board the 'Vernon,' but in the Admiral's house, with a splendid party. The 'Vernon' has been much attacked in the newspapers, but my account of her in my long letter is the correct one. I think in strong breezes she will beat the squadron. In light winds she may prove but an 'Endeavour.' I shall say no more of my hopes and fears about your letter to-morrow; but this I will say, and truly, that I think of

you all three or seven times a day, or haply twenty-one. I suppose the lads have gone to Elleray, according to my permission in my last, and with the means of doing so afforded by the stamp-receipt. I will write to you again before long; I hope it will not be very long before I return. Tell the girls to be sensible and good *gals*. Love to them and the lads, if these latter be with you; and do not doubt, my dearest Jane, that I am, and ever will be, your affectionate

"JOHN WILSON."

"CAMPEADORA SCHOONER, PLYMOUTH,
August 31, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—After some anxiety from not hearing from you, your letter of the 23d, direct to Plymouth, reached me the day before yesterday, and informed me that all are well. I cannot conjecture what has become of your other letters, but I have received only one long one written conjunctly, and your own of the 23d. Any or all intermediate must still be with Mr. Barrow. I presume that Sym has told you within these few days that he has heard from me, and I now sit down to inform you further of my proceedings. The squadron are now collected, and we have been sailing with strong breezes. The first day there was no right trial; the second, from Torbay to near Plymouth and back again, was also inconclusive. The chief struggle was between the 'Snake,' 'Castor,' and 'Vernon.' When going under full sail, in the same tack, close-hauled to the wind, the 'Vernon' was considerably ahead, the 'Castor' next, and the 'Snake' trying to

shoot across the 'Castor's' bow, but without success. The 'Castor' carried away her jib-boom, and signal was thereupon made by the Admiral for us to *put about.* The 'Castor' stood in, and we crossed her to windward only fifty yards. As she was more than fifty yards behind when we started, her people claimed the victory, but it was obviously no go. The day grew very boisterous, and we got safe at sunset into Torbay. On Sunday (the day following), I visited the Admiral, as told in my letter to Sym. On Monday we lay at rest. I am sorry to say, that on entering Torbay on Saturday night, a man fell overboard, and was drowned. On Wednesday morning, at four o'clock, the squadron got under weigh and left Torbay. I had gone on board the 'Campeadora' the night before, and slept there on condition that a look-out should be kept on the movements of the 'Vernon.' Judge of my feelings (mixed) when awakened at seven, and told all the ships had been gone for several hours. At eight we weighed anchor and followed the fleet. The tide favoured us, and so did a strong breeze from the land, and in a few hours we discovered the squadron some leagues ahead, but to leeward, and they were all racing, and, as we neared, I had a beautiful view of all their motions. The 'Snake' was two miles ahead of all the others; the 'Vernon' and 'Prince' were next, and close together. The 'Trinculo' followed, then the 'Nimrod;' next came the 'Castor,' and, finally, the 'Donegal;' the 'Dryad' had been sent to Portsmouth, and the 'Tyne' to Plymouth the day before. It now came on to blow very hard, and the waves ran hillocks

high; frequent squalls darkened the sky, and shut out the ships, which ever and anon re-appeared like phantoms. They seemed to retain their positions. Meanwhile we kept to windward, and ahead of them all, but with a pitching, and a tossing, and a rolling no mortal stomach could withstand. Still, though occasionally sick, I enjoyed the storm. My hat flew overboard, and we were all as wet as if in the sea. There was no danger, and the vessel was admirably managed, but she was liker a fish than a bird. Between four and five in the afternoon the 'Campeadora' dropt anchor behind the breakwater in Plymouth Sound. In rather more than half-an-hour the 'Snake' did the same; in another half-hour in came the 'Prince;' in quarter of an hour more the 'Vernon;' and shortly after the 'Trinculo' and the 'Nimrod;' the 'Castor' and 'Donegal' were obliged to lie off during the night. The race was fifty miles, beating to windward, and in blowy weather. The 'Vernon' was, at the end, seven miles ahead of the 'Castor,' her chief competitor, they being the only two frigates, and built by rivals, Symonds and Jeffrys. As soon as I got myself dried, and my hunger appeased, I joined the 'Vernon,' and joined the officers in the gun-room, crowing over the 'Castor.' They had sold all my effects by auction, and had considered me a deserter. The night was passed somewhat boisterously, *but the name of the Campeadora never once mentioned!!!!* She had beaten them all *like sacks*, and I therefore behaved as if I had come from Torbay in a balloon. Next day (Thursday) we remained all anchored behind the breakwater. Your welcome letter

I received on board the 'Vernon,' the evening of the race. I asked one of the officers what he thought of the 'Campeadora,' who had left Torbay three hours after the squadron, and anchored in the Sound of Plymouth half-an-hour before the 'Snake.' His answer was, '*That he had not seen her!* that we had not sailed with the squadron at all; and had been brought in by the tide and the land breeze'!!! The tide and land breeze had helped to bring us up with the squadron; but for five hours we beat them all, as I said, *like sacks* into our anchorage. The whole officers joined with my antagonist in argument, and it has been settled among them that the 'Campeadora' did not sail with the squadron, and that she beat nobody! Such, even at sea, is the littleness of men's souls; it is worse even than on Windermere at a regatta. This is Friday (the 31st), and I slept last night in the 'Campeadora.' I shall keep this letter open till I hear something of our intended motions, which I hope to do on boarding the 'Admiral.' The 'Vernon' is said to be *wet*, because when it blows hard, and she sails upon a wind, the spray spins over her main top-gallant mast. This it seems is reckoned a great merit. As to the noise on board—for it consists of everlasting groaning, howling, yelling, cursing, and swearing, which is the language in which all orders are given and executed—never less than 200 men are *prancing* on her decks, and occasionally 500; windlasses are ever at work, and iron cables are letting out and taking in, which rumble like thunder. Gun-carriages (two ton and a half heavy) are perpetually rolled about to alter her *trim*, and ever

and anon cannon fired close to your ears (32-pounders) which might waken the dead. Drums, too, are rolling frequently, and there are at all times the noise of heavy bodies falling, of winds whistling, and waves beating up to any degree. But all these noises are nothing compared to *holy-stoning!* This is the name given to scrubbing decks. A hundred men all fall at once upon their knees, and begin scrubbing the decks with large rough stones called holy-stones; this continues every morning from four o'clock to five, and is a noise that beggars all description. I sleep in the cock-pit, a place below both decks, in a swinging cot, which is very comfortable. But as soon as the decks are done, down come a dozen Jacks, and *holy-stone* the floor of the cock-pit, without taking any notice of me, who am swinging over their heads. That being over, all the midshipmen whose chests are in the cock-pit, come in to wash, and shave, and dress. You had better not imagine the scene that then ensues. As soon as the majority of them are gone I get up, and, at half-past seven, Captain Coryton of the Marines gives me his cabin to wash and dress in. I do so every morning, and the luxury of washing too became known to me for the first time; for you get covered with dust, and sand, and paint by day and night, to say nothing of tar and twine; in short, everything but feathers. The eating is excellent, and the drinking not bad, though sometimes rather too much of it.

"I have, since writing the above, seen Sir F. Collier, who informs me we start to-morrow forenoon (September 1st) for the coast of Ireland. I shall go; and

if the squadron does not return soon to Portsmouth, I shall sail from Cork to some northern port, and so home. I will write to you by the first opportunity, and I believe one will occur in a week. Love to the girls. I am happy to hear that Molly is getting on with her singing, and she may depend on my being pleased with her *chanson*. Meg is, no doubt, now a Sontag; perhaps Umbs may also prove a songstress. The boys by this time have, I suppose, been a while at Elleray. *Narcotic* is a good word for the Opium-Eater, but I read it hare-skin. I have just heard that another letter is lying for me on shore. I hope it is from some of you; but I cannot get it, I fear, till the morning, and I am this hour again on board the 'Vernon,' and it is blowing so hard that no boats are going on shore.

"I therefore conclude with warmest and sincerest affection for thyself and all our children. Give my kindest remembrances to my sister Jane, who, I devoutly trust, will continue to improve in health, and, ere long, be well. You are now but a family of four females, so be all good boys, and believe that I will be happy to be with you again, when I hope you will be happy to see again the old man. Once more, with love to you and the three Graces, I am, my dearest Jane, ever yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON.

"'VERNON,' OFF PLYMOUTH, *August 31st.*"

"LAND'S END, *Tuesday Evening, September 4th.*

"About eight o'clock morning we were off the Scilly Isles, and observed a steamer. It contained the Ad-

miralty and other grandees. Sir C. Paget, Sir F. Maitland, and Admiral Dundas, came on board at nine, and at ten signal was made for all ships to close upon the 'Vernon.' The wind was light but steady, and the day beautiful. We sailed till five o'clock (seven hours) in charming style, but it would take a volume to narrate all our evolutions. For the greater part of the time the 'Waterwitch' kept first, and then the 'Vernon,' the 'Snake' having outmanœuvred herself by passing too close to windward. The 'Castor' sailed well, but kept dropping to leeward. At half-past four the 'Vernon' weathered the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake,' and led the squadron. This was done by fair sailing, on which the Admiral made signal to shorten sail, which was done; and the grandees left us and went on board the steamer, which set off for Portsmouth. Sir Pulteney then came on board the 'Vernon,' and acknowledged we had beaten the squadron. The 'Castor' was four miles to leeward, the 'Stag' six, and the 'Donegal' eight! the 'Nimrod' as far; but the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake' were only a quarter of a mile under our lee. The triumph of the 'Vernon' is declared complete, but, in my opinion, the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake' may beat her another day; the 'Castor' cannot, in any wind. The Admiral has just left us, and if weather permit, Sir F. Collier and the Professor will dine to-morrow on board the 'Donegal.' We are now making sail back to the 'Lizard,' where, in the morning, a boat will come from shore for our letters. We will then put about for the coast of Ireland, as Sir Pulteney himself has told me; and therefore, my dearest Jane, either yourself or

the lasses, that is, the gals, must write to me, if possible, the evening you receive this—*His Majesty's Ship 'Vernon,' Cork*—without any reference to Barrow, and I shall get it probably before we leave that harbour. That will be the last time I shall hear from you before I return; and from Cork I will write to Sym, who will probably send you my letter, or part of it. Pray keep my letters for sake of the dates, for I have not been able to keep a journal. A good many things have occurred on board within these few days, but I have no room to narrate them. Warmest love to the progeny, who, I hope, do not forget him who tenderly loveth them. I expect to find them all grown on my return, and Catalani jealous of Sontag. I send them all kisses and prayers for their happiness, and for that of one of the best of wives to her affectionate husband,

"JOHN WILSON."

"OFF THE LIZARD, *September* 5, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I wrote a tolerably long letter the day before we left Plymouth, which was on Tuesday the 4th. I had then received three letters from you, including one that had been sent to Cork. I therefore knew that you were all well on the 23d August, and trust I believe you are so *now*. The squadron left port with a light leading wind, consisting of 'Donegal,' 'Vernon,' 'Castor,' 'Stag' (a 46 frigate), 'Nimrod,' 'Snake,' and 'Waterwitch.' The 'Dryad' is paid off, being a bad sailer, and the 'Tyne' sails for South America in a few days, and belongs no more to our flag. The 'Trinculo' has gone to Cork, and the 'Prince' is at Plymouth.

In beating out, 'Vernon' missed stays, and drifted, stern foremost, aboard the 'Castor,' with no inconsiderable crash, staving her boat in the slings, and making much cordage spin. We got off, however, without damage of any consequence, and towards night were off the Eddystone lighthouse. There was very little difference in the rate of going between 'Vernon' and 'Castor.' The 'Castor' rather beat us the first two hours, but at sunset (when sail is always taken in) we were to windward about 200 yards; the 'Snake,' as usual, a mile at least ahead, and to windward of us all. All night we kept under easy sail in 'our Admiral's lee,' and on Monday morning at six o'clock, signal was made for us to spread all our canvas, and try it before the wind. We soon got into a cluster, the breeze being so light as to be almost a calm, and so we carried on in a pretty but tedious style for the greater part of the day, our prows being in the direction of Falmouth. The Lords of the Admiralty are there at present, and I suppose we shall touch in this evening. They were at Plymouth, and I was introduced to one of them, Admiral Dundas, who was very civil; so was Sir C. Paget and Sir F. Maitland, the latter of whom invited me to see him at Portsmouth on our return, he being Admiral on that station. Sir J. Graham I did not see, as we were at dinner when he came on board the 'Vernon.' Sir Pulteney has been extremely kind, and is a good old man. I had not heard of poor Minna's death, and asked how she was, when he gave me the intelligence. She was a good woman, in my opinion. She died of dropsy, and had suffered much, but bore it like a Chris-

tian. We have just caught sight of an enormous lizard, so large that it is called 'The Lizard,' and we are all to lie under its shadow till morning, so good-night."

"CORK, *Friday, 14th Sept.* 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—I wrote to you on the *5th, off the Lizard,* and since then have *enjoyed a week's capital cruising* in all kinds of winds, except a positive storm. Your last letter received was the *29th of August;* and I am in hopes of getting your answer to mine of the 5th to-night. If I do not, I shall leave orders at the post-office to send it on to London, where I hope to be in a week from this day. But in case any accident should happen, I wish *one of you* to write to me, the *same day you get this, directed to me at 'Union Hotel, Charing Cross, London, to lie till called for,* telling me that you are all well. I shall be at Portsmouth (necessarily) a day or two before I go to London, but shall not stay in the metropolis more than *one day.* I rather think I shall come down to Edinburgh by land, for a steam-boat after the 'Vernon' will be rather dull, and at this season rolls most infernally. In that case I shall go by York; for I do not wish to trouble Elleray at present for sufficient reasons. As I shall travel *outside,* I shall probably stay a day at York; but I will write you a day before I leave London, communicating particulars, and you will see me before long.

"On Tuesday the 11th, we entered the Cove of Cork at sunset; the squadron at four o'clock. On Wednesday the 12th, I set off on foot for the city of Cork, distant thirteen miles, a most beautiful walk. At nine

o'clock, I took a seat in the mail-coach, and was off for Killarney. In the coach were a Captain and Mrs. Baillie, young people who had been in India, and near relatives of the Major and Mrs. Barlow. We became friends.

"At Killarney found that Mrs. Cashel[1] *was not there!* ought to have known that before. Stormy night, so kept snug in a good inn. Thursday 13th, left Killarney in a jingle at five o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Marino Lodge, on the Kenmare, distance twenty miles, before nine o'clock. Found the family all well, except Mrs. Cashel, who has an asthmatic cough, *which mention to nobody.* I will amuse you *when we meet* with my account of my visit to that quarter. Nothing could exceed their kindness, and she admires you beyond all. On Friday the 14th, left Marino Lodge in a taxed cart at five o'clock, and went nearly twenty miles through mountains to a place on the Cork road, where the mail overtook us. Got in—and afterwards out—after being *twice upset*, and three times half upset. More of that anon; no bones broken. I have just dined in the coffeeroom with three very agreeable Irishmen, whose names I do not know, but who asked me to drink wine as *the Professor.* I am just about to set off for the 'Vernon' in a jingle; and I hear that we sail to-morrow (Saturday the 15th), at five o'clock A.M. Indeed, Sir F. Collier told me so before I left the ship. I thought it would or might seem unkind not to see Grace when I was in Ireland, and therefore I travelled 160 miles for that purpose, being with them just twenty

[1] His sister.

hours. You must not be incensed with the shortness of this letter, for you must perceive that I have been in a dreadful racket. I intend writing another letter to Sym on our way up to Portsmouth; but do not say anything about it. If your letter has come thus far, it will be lying for me to-night on board the 'Vernon.' Tenderest love to the Graces, and also to the lads at Elleray. I hope you will be kind to the old man on his return—all of you.—Yours ever, most affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

"UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
Tuesday Afternoon, September 25th, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE,—The 'Vernon' anchored at Spithead this day week, and the day following I wrote to Sym, who would tell you of my welfare. I got your Cork letter on the Thursday, and on Friday I bade farewell to the 'Varmint' (as she is called), and dined on shore with the Williamses, who have a house at Portsmouth. That night I took coach to London, where I arrived about six o'clock, and went to bed for some hours. I found your letter lying for me soon after breakfast, and was rejoiced to find you were all well. On Saturday, Dr. Maginn dined with me; and on Sunday I called on Mrs. S. C. Hall and husband, Miss Landon, and Thomas Campbell, with the last, not least, of whom I passed the evening. There is a Captain Coryton (of the Marines) on board the 'Vernon,' whose wife and family live at Woolwich. I promised to call on them to tell them about him, and his mode of life, and did so on Monday, having walked thither and back

(about twenty miles). He is to be absent for three years in South America. I returned to London by seven, and dined with a German Baron, whose name I can neither spell nor pronounce, a Polish Patriot (not Shirma), and a French royalist. On Tuesday, that is, this day, after some business connected with my cruise, I called on Mrs. Jamieson, author of *King Charles's Beauties.* She is very clever, middle-aged, red-haired, and agreeable, though I suspect you would call her a conceited minx. She is to send some Italian airs to the guitar for Maggie, to the hotel this evening. I am going to dine to-day at the Literary Union, with Campbell and some others. To-morrow I shall be busy all day, calling on naval officers, and at the Admiralty, nor could I have sooner done so. And on Thursday, I shall leave London for York in one of the morning coaches. This will enable me to stop some hours there to rest, and I shall be in Edinburgh on Saturday afternoon; I do not know at what hour, but I believe *two or three after the mail,* unless I take my place *in the mail from York.* The gals can ask Bob at what hour any coach arrives in Edinburgh from York, besides the mail. I should think he will know. But should anything detain me, it will only be my not getting a place at York. The gals may take a look at the mail, perhaps on Saturday. I need say no more than that I shall be truly happy to find you all well and happy, as you deserve to be. God bless you all!—Yours ever affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

CHAPTER XIV.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1832–37.

THE following letter will be read with interest:—

"LONDON, *November* 30, 1832.

"SIR,—You have often, and 'on the *Rialto*' too, twitted me with an addition to Sonnets, and 'such small deer' of poetry, sometimes in a spirit of good-humour, at others in that tone of raillery which is so awful to young gentlemen given to rhyming *love* and *dove*. Yet, notwithstanding the terrors of your frown, I think there is so much of the milk of human kindness blending up with that rough nature of yours, as would prevent you from willingly hurting the weak and the defenceless; on the contrary, if Master Feeble acknowledged his failing in a becoming manner, I can believe that you would put the timid gentleman on his legs, pat his head, cocker his alarmed features into a complacent smile, and, giving him something nice, washing it down with a jorum of whisky-toddy, send him home to his lodgings and landlady with your compliments, so that I, you will perceive, have no bad opinion of your lionship.

"You can do me a great good; and when I assure you, which I do seriously and in all sincerity, that I

seek not your favour in the spirit of vanity, that I may plume myself with it hereafter; and when I tell you that I have ventured on this publication not to exalt myself, but, if possible, to benefit some poor relations, weighed down by the pressure of our bad times, I am sure that I may rely on your appreciating my motive, whatever you may think of the means I have taken to work it out.

"One thing more I would say; these poems, such as they are, are the productions of a self-educated man, who, in his tenth year of childhood, with little more than a knowledge of his *Reading Made Easy*, was driven out into the world to seek his bread, and pick up such acquirements as he could meet with; these are not many, for he was not lucky enough to meet with many. This is a fact which I do not care that the public should know, for what has that monster so well off for heads to do with it; nor, perhaps, have you; I have mentioned it merely because I could not conceal it at this moment, when the disadvantages it has surrounded me with return upon me like old grievances for a time forgotten, but come back again to 'sight and seeing,' as palpable as ever, and as provoking.

"Enough of myself. There are many errors in the book staring me out of countenance. While it was in the press I was dangerously ill, and, therefore, paid but little and distracted attention to it. Think, then, as mercifully of me and mine as you can; and though, when you are frolicsome, you love to spatter us poor Cockneys, sometimes justly enough, at others not so,

believe that I can candidly appreciate the power and the beauty of some parts of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and that I am, all differences notwithstanding, your humble servant, * * *"[1]

In my mother's letters during 1833 and 1834, the strong political feelings of the time are occasionally exhibited. In one she says:—"We are all terribly disgusted and annoyed at the result of the late elections. I never look into a newspaper now; and my only comfort is in reading the political papers in *Blackwood*, and remembering that I have lived in the times of the Georges." Again she writes, "What do you think of Church and State affairs? We are in a pretty way; oh, for the good old times! Thank Heaven, while Mr. Wilson can hold a pen, it will be wielded in defence of the right cause." His pen, indeed, was not allowed to lie idle at this time, as the reader will find by referring to his contributions. During 1833-34 he wrote no fewer than fifty-four articles for *Blackwood*, or upwards of 2400 closely printed columns on politics and general literature. Among these were reviews of Ebenezer Elliot[2] and Audubon the ornithologist, which called forth interesting and characteristic replies.

[1] The signature of this letter has been torn off, but the letter itself is endorsed "from Charles Lamb to Professor Wilson." I am, however, afraid that it is not the production of "Elia," and as I am not familiar with the handwriting, I cannot say who is writer, or whether the appeal was responded to.

[2] Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn-Law Rhymer, was born in 1781; he died in 1849.

FROM EBENEZER ELLIOT.

"SHEFFIELD, *8th May* 1834.

"MR. PROFESSOR,—I do not write merely to thank you for your almost fatherly criticism on my poetry, but to say, that when I sent that unhappy letter, addressed, I suppose, to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*, I knew not that the Professor was the editor. I had been told that the famous rural articles were yours, and the 'Noctes.' This was all I knew of that terrible incarnation of the Scotch Thistle, Christopher North. I had judged from his portrait on the cover of the Magazine. I understand it is a true portrait of Mr. Blackwood, whose name even now involuntarily brings before my imagination a personage ready to flay poor Radicals alive. When at length I understood you was the editor, I still thought you was only the successor of C. North, the dreadful. The letter must have been the result of despair. The *Monthly Review* had stricken me on the heart with a hand of ice, but I had failed to attract the attention of the critics generally; and perhaps I then thought that even an unfavourable notice in *Blackwood* would be better than none. But when I was told, a few days ago, that I was reviewed in 'Maga,' I expected I was done for, never to hold up my head again. Having no copy of the letter, I know not what vileness it may contain, besides the sad vulgarity[1] unfortunately quoted, and for which I blush through

[1] "Mr. Elliott was pleased, a good while ago, in a letter, the reverse of flattering, addressed to us, and written with his own hard hoof of a hand, to call us 'a big blue-bottle,' but we bear no resemblance to that insect," etc. – From "Poetry of E. Elliott," in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1834.

my marrow; but on the word of a poet, whose fiction is truth, when I wrote it I was no more aware, than if you had never been born, that I was writing to Professor Wilson. I should hate myself if I could deliberately have sent a disrespectful letter to the author of those inimitable rural pictures, which, before God, I believe have lengthened my days on earth.

"After your almost saintly forbearance, I must not bother you about the Corn-Laws; but I will just observe that, in our Island of Jersey, where (perjury [*sic*] excepted) the trade in corn is free, land lets much higher than in England. But is it not a shame that wheat should be sent from Holland to Jersey, after incurring heavy charges, and the Dutchman's profit, and then be sent to England as the produce of Jersey? Poor John Bull paying for all out of his workhouse wages, or the sixteen-pence which he receives for fourteen hours' factory labour in the climate of Jamaica.

"What is to follow such legislation?—I am, with heartfelt respect and thankfulness,

"EBENEZER ELLIOT."

I cannot resist giving a passage from an article which afforded the author of the *Corn-Law Rhymes* so much genuine pleasure:—

"Ebenezer Elliott does—not only now and then, but often—ruralize; with the intense passionateness of a fine spirit escaping from smoke and slavery into the fresh air of freedom—with the tenderness of a gentle spirit communing with Nature in Sabbath-rest. Greedily he gulps the dewy breath of morn, like a

man who has been long suffering from thirst drinking at a wayside well. He feasts upon the flowers—with his eyes, with his lips; he walks along the grass as if it were cooling to his feet. The slow typhus fever perpetual with townsmen is changed into a quick gladsome glow, like the life of life. A strong animal pleasure possesses the limbs and frame of the strong man released from labour, yet finding no leisure to loiter in the lanes—and away with him to the woods and rocks and heaven-kissing hills. But that is not all his pleasure—though it might suffice, one would think, for a slave. Through all his senses it penetrates into his soul—and his soul gets wings and soars. Yes; it has the wings of a dove, and flees away—and is at rest! Where are the heaven-kissing hills in Hallamshire? Here, and there, and everywhere—for the sky stoops down to kiss them—and the presence of a poet scares not away, but consecrates their embraces

'Under the opening eyelids of the morn.'

Of such kind is the love of nature that breaks out in all the compositions of this town-bred poet. Nature to him is a mistress whom he cannot visit when he will, and whom he wooes, not stealthily, but by snatches—snatches torn from time, and shortened by joy that 'thinks down hours to moments.' Even in her sweet companionship he seems scarcely ever altogether forgetful of the place from which he made his escape to rush into her arms, and clasp her to his breast. He knows that his bliss must be brief, and that an iron voice, like a knell, is ringing him back to dust and ashes. So he smothers her with kisses—and tearing

himself away—again with bare arms he is beating at the anvil, and feels that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. For Ebenezer Elliott, gentle reader, is a worker in iron; that is—to use his own words—'*a dealer in steel, working hard every day; literally* labouring *with my head and hands, and, alas, with my heart too! If you think the steel-trade, in these profitless days, is not a heavy, hard-working trade,* come and break *a ton.*'

"We have worked at manual labour for our amusement, but, it was so ordered, never for bread; for reefing and reeving can hardly be called manual labour—it comes to be as facile to the fingers as the brandishing of this present pen. We have ploughed, sowed, reaped, mowed, pitchforked, threshed; and put heart and knee to the gavelock hoisting rocks. But not for a day's darg, and not for bread. Now here lies the effectual and vital distinction between the condition of our poet and his critic—between the condition of Ebenezer Elliott and that of all our other poets, except Robert Burns."[1]

The next letter is from Mr. Audubon:[2]—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The first hour of this new-year was ushered to me surrounded by my dear flock, all comfortably seated around a small table, in a middle-sized room, where I sincerely wished you had been also, to witness the flowing gladness of our senses, as from one of us "Audubon's Ornithological Biography" was read from your ever-valuable Journal. I wished

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1834.

[2] J. J. Audubon, author of *The Birds of America*, etc., died in 1831.

this because I felt assured that your noble heart would have received our most grateful thanks with pleasure, the instant our simple ideas had conveyed to you the grant of happiness we experienced at your hands. You were not with us, alas! but to make amends the best way we could, all of a common accord drank to the health, prosperity, and long life, of our generous, talented, and ever kind friend, Professor John Wilson, and all those amiable beings who cling around his heart! May those our sincerest wishes reach you soon, and may they be sealed by Him who granted us existence, and the joys heaped upon the 'American woodsman' and his family, in your hospitable land, and may we deserve all the benefits we have received in your ever dear country, although it may prove impossible to us to do more than to be ever grateful to her worthy sons.

"Accept our respectful united regards, and offer them to your family, whilst I remain, with highest esteem, your truly thankful friend and most obedient servant, JOHN J. AUDUBON."

The next letter is from the Rev. James White:[1]—

"LOXLEY, STRATFORD-ON-AVON,
"*4th November* 1834.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The last was an admirable 'Noctes,' and in my opinion, makes up for the one for July.

[1] The Rev. J. White, of Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, author of *Sir Frizzle Pumpkin, Nights at Mess, etc.*, and other stories, died March 28, 1862, aged fifty-eight.—"Mr. White, says the *Edinburgh Courant*, who was a native of this county, where his family still possess considerable property, was born in the year 1804. After studying with success at Glasgow and

After describing the party at Carnegie's, who did you mean by the ass that, after braying loud enough to deafen Christopher, went braying all over the Borders? You unconscionable monster, did you mean me? Vicar of the consolidated livings of Loxley and Bray! I console myself with thinking it is something to be mentioned in the 'Noctes,' though in no higher character than an ass.

"Have you ever thought of making Hogg a metempsychosist? what a famous description he would give of his feelings when he was a whale (the one that swallowed Jonah), or a tiger, or an antediluvian *aligautor* near the Falls of Niagara, his disgust after being shot as an eagle, to find himself a herd at the head of Ettrick![1]

"Do you think of coming to England next year? Remember, whenever you do, you have promised me a benefit. Has Blair come up to college yet? If he

Oxford, he took orders in the Church of England, and was presented by Lord Brougham to a living in Suffolk, which he afterwards gave up for another in Warwickshire. On ultimately succeeding to a considerable patrimony he retired from the Church and removed with his family to the Isle of Wight, where Mrs. White had inherited from her father, Colonel Hill of St. Boniface, a portion of his estate, Bonchurch, so celebrated for its beauty and mild climate. His retirement enabled him to devote a considerable share of his time to literary pursuits, which he prosecuted with much success. The pages of *Blackwood* were enlivened by many of his contributions of a light kind, too popular and well known to require to be enumerated; and his later works, including the *Eighteen Christian Centuries* and the *History of France*, showed that his industry and accuracy, as well as his good sense and sound judgment, were not inferior to his other and more popular talents."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

[1] This hint appears to have been acted upon, as those who are interested may read the Shepherd's transmigrations fully detailed in the 'Noctes' of February 1835.

has, I wish you would for once write me a letter with his address; for, as I am only a day's drive from Oxford, I should be most happy to show him this part of the country in the short vacation. My wife desires to be very kindly remembered to you and Mrs. Wilson, not forgetting the young ladies.—And I remain, ever yours very truly, JAMES WHITE."

Attention to the ordinary course of duties, and the numerous occupations which engrossed his daily life, never stood in the way of my father's endeavours to be useful to his fellow-men. An example of this may be seen in his correspondence with a mutual friend, in order to pacify and to restore Mr. Hogg to his former position with Mr. Blackwood. This labour, for such it was, ended ultimately to the satisfaction of all parties, and the correspondence which led to that result is truly honourable to the writers.

"MY DEAR SHEPHERD,—From the first blush of the business, I greatly disliked your quarrel with the Blackwoods, and often wished to be instrumental in putting an end to it, but I saw no opening, and did not choose to be needlessly obtrusive. Hearing that you would rather it was made up, and not doubting that Mr. Blackwood would meet you for that purpose in an amicable spirit, I volunteer my services—if you and he choose to accept of them—as mediator.

"I propose this—that all mere differences on this, and that, and every subject, and all asperities of sentiment or language on either side, be at once forgotten, and never once alluded to—so that there shall be asked

no explanation nor apology, but each of you continue to think yourself in the right, without taking the trouble to say so.

"But you have accused Mr. Blackwood in your correspondence with him, as I understand, of shabbiness, meanness, selfish motives, and almost dishonesty. In your Memoir there is an allusion to some transaction about a bill, which directly charges Mr. Blackwood with want of integrity. In that light it was received by a knave and fool in *Fraser's Magazine*, and on it was founded a public charge of downright dishonesty against a perfectly honourable and honest man. Now, my good Sir, insinuations or accusations of this kind are quite 'another guess matter' from mere ebullitions of temper, and it is impossible that Mr. Blackwood can ever make up any quarrel with any man *who doubts his integrity.* It is your bounden duty, therefore, to make amends to him on this subject. But even here I would not counsel *any apology.* I would say that it is your duty as an honest man to say fully, and freely, and unequivocally that you know Mr. Blackwood to be one, and in all his dealings with you he has behaved as one. This avowal is no more than he is entitled to from you; and, of course, it should be taken in lieu of an apology. As to writing henceforth in 'Maga,' I am sure it would give me the greatest pleasure to see the Shepherd adorning that work with his friends again; and, in that case, it would be graceful and becoming in you to address Mr. Blackwood in terms of esteem, such as would remove from all minds any idea that you ever wished to accuse him of want of principle. I should think that would

be agreeable to yourself, and that it would be agreeable to all who feel the kindest interest in your character and reputation. In this way you would both appear in your true colours, and to the best advantage.

"As for the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, that is a subject in which I am chiefly concerned; and there shall never be another with you in it, *if indeed that be disagreeable to you!!!* But all the idiots in existence shall never persuade me that in those dialogues you are not respected and honoured, and that they have not spread the fame of your genius and your virtues all over Europe, America, Asia, and Africa. If there be another man who has done more for your fame than *I* have done, let me know in what region of the moon he has taken up his abode. But let the 'Noctes' drop, or let us *talk* upon that subject, if you choose, that we may find out which of us is insane, perhaps *both*.

"Show this letter to the Grays—our friends—and let them say whether or not it be reasonable, and if any good is likely to result from my services. I have written of my own accord, and without any authority from Mr. Blackwood, but entirely from believing that his kindness towards you would dispose him to make the matter up at once, on the one condition which, as an honest man, I would advise him to consider essential, and without which, indeed, he could not listen to any proposal.—I am, my dear Sir, your affectionate friend,

"JOHN WILSON."

"MY DEAR MR. HOGG,—Your letter in answer to mine is written as mine was, in a friendly spirit; but

on considering its various contents, I feel that I can be of no use at present in effecting a reconciliation between you and Mr. Blackwood. I was induced to offer my services by my own sincere regard for you, and by the wishes of Mrs. Izett and Mr. Grieve; but it rarely happens that an unaccredited mediator between offended friends in a somewhat complicated quarrel can effect any good. Should you, at any future time, wish me to give an opinion in this matter, or advice of any sort, you will find me ready to do so with the utmost sincerity. I will merely mention to Mr. Grieve, who was desirous of having you and Mr. Blackwood and myself to dinner, that I wrote you, and had an answer from you; but I shall leave you to tell him or not, as you please, what passed between us. That I may not fall into any unintentional mis-statement, I will likewise tell Mr. Blackwood the same, and no more, that I may not do more harm than good by having taken any step in the affair. If you never have made any accusation of the kind I mentioned against Mr. Blackwood, then am I ignorant of the merits of the case altogether, and my interference is only an additional instance of the danger of volunteering counsel, with erroneous impressions of the relative situation of the parties. I proposed a plan of reconciliation, which seemed to me to make no unpleasant demand on either party, and which was extremely simple; but it would seem that I took for granted certain accusations or insinuations against Mr. Blackwood's character as a man of business, which you never made. I am, therefore, in the dark, and require to be instructed, in-

stead of being privileged to counsel.—With every kind sentiment, I am, my dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

"JOHN WILSON."

In a long letter to Mr. Grieve, my father is at great pains to clear up the matter, and effect the much-desired reconciliation on terms honourable to both parties. He says:—

"If Mr. Hogg puts his return as a writer to 'Maga,' on the ground that 'Maga' suffers greatly from his absence from her pages, and that Mr. B. must be very desirous of his re-assistance, that will at once be a stumbling-block in the way of settlement; for Mr. B., whether rightly or wrongly, will not make the admission. No doubt Mr. H.'s articles were often excellent, and no doubt the 'Noctes' were very popular, but the Magazine, however much many readers must have missed Mr. Hogg and the 'Noctes,' has been gradually increasing in sale, and therefore Mr. B. will never give in to that view of the subject.

"Mr. Hogg, in his letter to me, and in a long conversation I had with him in my own house yesterday after dinner, sticks to his proposal of having £100 settled on him, on condition of writing, and of becoming again the hero of the 'Noctes,' as before. I see many, many difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, and I *know* that Mr. Blackwood will never agree to it in that shape; for it might eventually prove degrading and disgraceful to both parties, appearing to the public to be a bribe given and taken dishonourably.

"But nothing can be more reasonable than for Mr.

Hogg to make £100 or more by 'Maga,' and by the *Agricultural Journal*. If he writes again for both, Mr. B. is bound to pay him handsomely and generously as an old friend and man of genius; and no doubt he will do so, so that if Mr. Hogg exert himself to a degree *you and I* think reasonable, there can be no doubt that he will get £100 or more from Mr. Blackwood, without any positive bargain of the kind above mentioned, which might injure Mr. Hogg's reputation, and appear to the public in a degrading light.

"To insure this, *none of Mr. Hogg's articles should ever again be returned*. If now and then any of them are inadmissible *they should still be paid for*, and Mr. Blackwood, I have no doubt, would at once agree to that, so that at the end of the year Mr. Hogg would have received his £100 or more, without any objectionable condition, and on reasonable exertions.

"And now a few words about myself. The Shepherd in his letter to me (which you have seen, I believe), seems to say that *I* ought to settle the £100 a year on him, and that he is willing to receive it from me, if I think it will be for my own benefit. I have said nothing about this *to him*, but to *you* I merely say that I never did and never will interfere in any way with the pecuniary concerns of the Magazine, that being the affair of Mr. Blackwood; *secondly*, that of all the writers in it, *I* have done *most* for the *least* remuneration, though Mr. B. and I have never once had one word of disagreement on that subject; and *thirdly*, that it is a matter of the most perfect indifference to me, whether or not I ever again write another 'Noctes,' for all that I

write on any subject seems to be popular far above its deserts; and considering the great number of 'Noctes' I have written, I feel very much indisposed ever to resume them.[1] My own personal gain or loss, therefore, must be put out of sight entirely in this question; as I can neither gain nor lose by any arrangement between Mr. B. and Mr. Hogg, though the Shepherd thinks otherwise.

"This, likewise, must and will be considered by Mr. Blackwood, whether the 'Noctes' *can* be resumed, for if the public supposed that *I* were influenced by a regard to my own interests in resuming them, I most certainly never would; and were I to resume them, and Mr. Hogg again to prove wilful, and order them to be discontinued, I should feel myself placed in a condition unworthy of me. I wrote the 'Noctes' to benefit and do honour to Mr. Hogg, much more than to benefit myself; and but for them, he with all his extraordinary powers would not have been universally known as he now is; for poetical fame, you well know, is fleeting and precarious. After more than a dozen years' acquiescence and delight in the 'Noctes,' the Shepherd, because he quarrelled with Mr. Blackwood *on other grounds,* puts an end to them, which by the bye he had no *right* to do. It is for me to consider whether I *can* resume them; but if I do, it must be clearly understood that I am not influenced by self-interest, but merely by a desire to bring back things as they were before, and to contribute my part to an amicable arrangement.

[1] My father never wrote another "Noctes" after the Shepherd's death, which took place in 1835.

"But I will say *to you* what must not be said to anybody else, that if it be necessary, owing to Mr. Hogg not writing a sufficient number of articles fit for insertion, to make up some considerable sum towards £100 per annum being given to him, I will certainly contribute half of it along with Mr. Blackwood.

"There are various other points to be attended to. The Magazine *now* is the least *personal* periodical existing, and it will continue so. Now Mr. Hogg may wish to insert articles about London and so on, that may be *extremely personal.* Mr. Blackwood could not take such articles. He *has himself* reason to be offended with Mr. Hogg's writings about himself, and could not consistently in like manner offend others. Suppose that the Shepherd sent such MS. for the first year as could not be inserted at all, is Mr. Blackwood to be paying him £100 for nothing? The *kind,* therefore, of his contributions must be considered by 'James,' though he may still be allowed considerable latitude.

"With respect to past quarrels, they should at once be forgotten by both parties, and not a word said about them, except *if* Mr. Hogg has published anything reflecting on Mr. Blackwood's *integrity. I think he has. That,* therefore, must be done away with by the Shepherd in the Magazine itself, but not in the way of *apology,* but in a manly manner, such as would do honour to himself, and at once put down all the calumnies of others, to which Mr. Blackwood has been unjustly exposed, especially in *Fraser's Magazine.* All abuse of Mr. Blackwood in that work, *as founded on his behaviour to Mr. Hogg,* must, by Mr. Hogg, be put a stop to; for

if he continues to write in *Fraser*, and to allow those people to put into his mouth whatever they choose (and they hold him up to ridicule every month after a very different fashion from the NOCTES ! !), their abuse of Mr. Blackwood will seem to be sanctioned by Mr. Hogg, and neutralize whatever he may say in 'Maga.' This is plain.

"Consider what I have said attentively, and I will call on you *on Tuesday at two o'clock*, and will explain a few other matters perhaps tedious to write upon. After that, the sooner you see Mr. B. the better, and I think an arrangement may be made, in itself reasonable and beneficial to all parties on the above basis.—Yours ever affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

The result of these friendly negotiations may be gathered from the "Noctes" of May 1834, in which there is a lively and most amusing description of the Shepherd's return to the bosom of his friends in the tent at the Fairy's Cleugh.[1]

I make use of my mother's words to tell of the plans for the summer of 1834 :—"Our own plans for

[1] The whole dialogue, which will be found in the *Noctes*, May 1834, is too long for quotation, but a few lines of the apology may be given :—

"I'll never breathe a whisper even to my ain heart, at the laneliest hour o' midnight, except it be when I am saying my prayers, o' ony misunderstanding that ever happened between us twa, either about 'Mawga' or ony ither topic, as lang's I leeve, an' am no deserted o' my senses, but am left in full possession of the gift of reason; and I now dicht aff the tablets o' my memory ilka letter o' ony ugly record that the Enemy, taking the advantage o' the corruption o' our fallen nature, contrived to scarify there wi' the pint o' an airn pen, red-het frae yon wicked place. I now dicht them a' aff, just as I dicht aff frae this table the wine-drops wi' ma sleeve; and I forgive ye frae the very bottom o' ma sowle," etc. etc.

the summer are to spend four months of it at least, that is, from the 20th June till the 20th October, in Ettrick Forest. The house we have taken, which is furnished, belongs to Lord Napier, who is at present in China, and he wished to get it let for the summer; but, from the retirement of the situation, hardly expected to meet with a tenant for that time. It is called Thirlstane Castle; the country around is all interesting, being pastoral, with no lack of wood and water, and a great lack of neighbours; we all like retirement, young and old, and look forward, with great satisfaction, to spending a quiet summer."

We accordingly took up our quarters at Thirlstane, and enjoyed Ettrick Forest vastly; the boys had their fishing and shooting; the very dogs were happy. "The dowgs," as James Hogg called them, shared in all our amusements; it was here that Rover had his adventure with the witch transformed into a hare. "She was sitting in her ain kail-yaird, the preceese house I dinna choose to mention, when Giraffe, in louping ower the dyke, louped ower her, and she gied a spang intil the road, turning round her fud within a yard o' Clavers,[1]— and then sic a brassle; a' three thegither up the brae, and then back again in a hairy whirlwind; twa miles in less than ae minute. She made for the mouth of the syver,[2] but Rover, wha had happened to be examining it in his inquisitive way, and kent naething o' the course, was coming out just as she was gaun in, an' atween the twa there ensued, unseen in the syver, a desperate battle. Well dune witch; well dune warlock; and

[1] The Shepherd's colleys. [2] A covered drain.

at ae time I feared, frae his yelping and yowling, that Rover was getting the worst o't, and might lose his life. Auld poosies[1] cuff sair wi' their fore-paws, and theirs is a wicked bite. But the outlandish wolfiness in Rover brak forth in extremity, and he cam rushing out o' the syver wi' her in his mouth, shaking her savagely, as if she had been but a ratton, and I had to choke him off. Forbye thrappling her, he had bit intil the jugular; and she had lost sae meikle bluid, that you hae eaten her the noo roasted, instead o' her made intil soup."

Rover was a colley from the beautiful pastures of Westmoreland; he had succeeded Brontë[2] in the Professor's affections. He had all the sagacity of his species; he was generally admired, but strictly speaking he was not beautiful, as the Shepherd remarked that he had "a cross o' some outlandish blood" in his veins; he, however, walked with a stately, defiant air, and was very "leesh;" his coat was black and glossy, it gleamed in the light; a white ring surrounded his neck, and melted away into the depths of his muscular chest; he was very loving and affectionate, and as we children told him everything that was going on, these communications quickly opened his mind, and Rover increased so much the more in intelligence. We never doubted in his humanity, and treated him accordingly; animation of spirit and activity of body combined to give him a more than usual share of enjoyment. Rover's companion in dog-life was Fang the terrier. Poor Fang was one of the victims in Hawthornden

[1] Hares. [2] A favourite dog of my father's, of whom more anon.

garden; but at Thirlstane he, like Rover, and like us all, old and young, enjoyed himself vastly. Poor Rover fell sick in the spring of the following year, and struggled for many days with dumb madness. I remember that shortly before the poor creature died, longing for the sympathy of his master's kind voice, he crawled up stairs to a room next the drawing-room; my father stood beside him, trying to soothe and comfort the poor animal. A very few minutes before death closed his fast-glazing eye, the Professor said, "Rover, my poor fellow, give me your paw." The dying animal made an effort to reach his master's hand; and so thus parted my father with his favourite, as one man taking farewell of another. My father loved "both man, and bird, and beast;" he could turn at any moment from the hardest work, with playful tenderness, to some household pet, or any object coloured by home affection.[1]

Wife, children, pets, idealized as they sometimes are, play through many of his most beautiful and imaginative essays. Memory revives in his soul matters trivial

[1] It is worth observing how close in description two students of dog-life have approached each other. Every one remembers the celebrated contest in *Rab and his Friends;* here is my father's description of a dog-fight from the *Noctes.* No one was more amused at the resemblance than the genial author of *Rab,* when the writer pointed out that he had been anticipated by the "Shepherd:"—

"Doun another close, and a battle o' dowgs! A bull-dowg and a mastiff! The great big brown mastiff mouthin' the bull-dowg by the verra haunches, as if to crunch his back, and the wee white bull-dowg never seeming to fash his thoomb, but sticking by the regular set teeth o' his under-hung jaw to the throat o' the mastiff, close to the jugular, and has to be drawn off the grip by twa strong baker-boys pu'in' at the tail o' the tane, and twa strong butcher-boys pu'in' at the tail o' the tither; for the mastiff's maister begins to fear that the viper at his throat will kill him out-

enough; but to those familiar with his ways, these little touches, embalming the fancy or taste of some cherished friend, are deeply interesting. For example, my mother's favourite plant was the myrtle: we find it peeping out here and there in his writings, thus—

North. "These are mere myrtles."

Shepherd. "Mere myrtles! Dinna say that again o' them—mere; an ungratefu' word, of a flowery plant, a' fu' o' bonny white starries; and is that their scent that I smell?"

North. "The balm is from many breaths, my dear James. Nothing that grows is without fragrance."

In a letter written by my mother this autumn she says:—"We like our residence exceedingly, notwithstanding its great retirement and moist climate: the latter we were prepared for before we came, and have certainly not been disappointed, for we have had rather more of rain than fair weather. The house is situated in a narrow valley in Ettrick, with high hills on every side, which attract the clouds. We, however, contrive to amuse ourselves very well, with books and work, music and drawing; and when fair and fine, the boys and girls have their ponies, and the old people a safe

right, and offers to pay a' bets, and confess his dowg has lost the battle. But the crowd wish to see the fecht out—and harl the dowgs that are noo worrying ither without any growling—baith silent, except a sort o' snorting through the nostrils, and a kind o' guller in their gullets,—I say the crowd harl them out o' the midden, ontil the stanes again—and, 'Weel dune Cæsar!' 'Better dune Vesper!' 'A mutchkin to a gill on Whitey!' 'The muckle ane canna fecht!' 'See how the wee bick is worrying him noo, by a new spat on the thrapple!' 'He wud rin awa', gin she wud let him loose!' 'She's just like her mother, that belanged to the caravan o' wild beasts!' 'O, man, Davie, but I wud like to get a breed out o' her by the watch-dowg at Bellmaiden Bleachfield, that killed, ye ken, the Kilmarnock carrier's Help in twenty minutes at Kingswell!'"—*Noctes*, vol. i. p. 217.

low open carriage, yclept a drosky, in which they take the air. The walks are quite to my taste, and without number in the wood which surrounds the house, and there is one delightful walk, the avenue, which is the approach, and which, from one lodge to the other, is rather more than a mile of nice dry gravel, and quite level, or nearly so, which suits me vastly well; there is a beautiful flower-garden close to the house and a very pretty brawling stream, which reminds one of Stockgill at Ambleside; there is a very good waterfall likewise in the grounds, about a mile from the house, which I have not yet seen, the path being very steep, and, owing to the rains, very wet; it is called the Black Spout. The boys have abundance of amusement in fishing and shooting, there being plenty of game,—hares and rabbits. John has the Duke of Buccleuch's permission to shoot, and therefore we expect to have plenty of grouse. . . . Our neighbours, who are few and far between, consist of respectable farmers, who have showed us great attention, indeed, Mr. Wilson was known to all the neighbourhood long ago, in his pedestrian perambulations. The church is about a mile and a half from us, a neat little building, with a comfortable manse attached. Mr. Smith, the minister, is a very favourable specimen of a Scotch clergyman, with a modest, hospitable wife, and two children.

"Mr. Wilson was obliged to go to Edinburgh last Saturday, but I hope he will be here again on Wednesday. He is staying at the Bank. Poor Mr. Blackwood is very ill; indeed, I fear dangerously so. It is a surgical case, and though his general health has not as yet

suffered, should that give way there is no chance for him. He would be an irreparable loss to his family, and a serious one to Edinburgh, being an excellent citizen, a magistrate, and highly respected even by his enemies."

My father's spirits were at this time very much disturbed at the prospect of soon losing his kind and long-tried friend, the gradual increase of whose illness he writes of with much feeling to his wife :—

"GLOUCESTER PLACE, *Thursday Night.*

"MY DEAR JANE,—I found Mr. Blackwood apparently near his dissolution, but entirely sensible, and well aware of his state, which indeed he had been for a long time, though, till lately, he had never said so, not wishing to disturb his family. He was very cheerful, and we spoke cheerfully of various matters; this was on Monday, on my arrival from Peebles in a chaise, the coach being full. Tuesday was a day of rain, and being very ill, I lay all the day in bed. I did not, therefore, see any of the Blackwoods, nor anybody else, but heard that he was keeping much the same. On Wednesday, I saw Alexander and Robert, and found there was no change. This morning (Thursday) I called, and found him looking on the whole better than before, stronger in his speech and general appearance. I had much conversation with him, and found him quite prepared to die, pleased with the kindness of all around him, and grateful for all mercies. It is impossible, I think, that he can live many days, and yet the medical men all declared on Sunday that he could not hold out many hours. A good conscience is the best comforter on such a bed as his, and were his bed mine to-morrow,

bless God I have a conscience that would support me as it supports him, and which will support me till then, while I strive to do my duty to my family, with weakened powers both of mind and body, but under circumstances which more than ever demand exertion. I have been too ill to write one word since I came, and have seen nobody, nor shall I till I return to Thirlstane. Not one word of the Magazine is written. Last night I made an effort and walked to the Bank through a tremendous storm.

"I was in bed to-day till after bank hours, and could not disturb the Blackwoods, of whom I have not heard since the morning. I have consulted Liston. Sedentary employments are bad for that complaint, but sedentary I must be, and will work till I can work no longer. It is necessary that I should do, and better men have done so, and will do so while the world lasts. Thank God I injure nobody in thought, word, or deed. I am willing to die for my family, who, one and all, yourself included, deserve all that is good at my hands. I believe that poor Mr. Blackwood's exertions have caused his illness, and after his death my work must be incessant, till the night comes in which no man can work. I have been interrupted all summer, but winter must see another sight, and I will do my utmost. I will write again by Ebenezer Hogg, and shall not, indeed cannot, leave this before Mr. Blackwood's death. He cannot survive many days, but I do not think the boys and Mr. Hay need come in. I will speak of that again in my letter.—I am yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

"BANK, *Thursday Night.*

"MY DEAR JANE,—I arrived at the Bank at half-past twelve on Monday with a violent toothache; dined there alone; saw the Blackwoods, and went to bed at nine. On Tuesday called on Mr. Blackwood, and found him tolerably well. Lost all that day in being unable to settle to anything; finding the bank-house most uncomfortable in all respects—no pillows to the beds, no sofas, no tables on which it was possible to write, from their being so low and the chairs so high. I did nothing. On Wednesday did a little, but not much; and dined, perhaps injudiciously, with Liston,[1] to meet Schetky;[2] stayed till one o'clock; and to-day had an open and confused head; wrote in the back-shop, but not very much. I sent for Nancy to the Bank, and found from her that she was picking currants in Gloucester Place, and told her that I would be there to-morrow (Friday) at nine o'clock, and write in my room, which, she says, is open, and sleep at the Bank. I dine at Mr. Blackwood's. Mr. Hay called on me at

[1] Robert Liston, the celebrated surgeon; died in 1847.

[2] John Schetky, an artist, a friend of my father's.—"I have no conceit of those 'who are all things to all men.' Why, I have seen John Schetky himself in the sulks with sumphs, though he is more tolerant of ninnies and noodles than almost any other man of genius I have ever known; but clap him down among a choice crew of kindred spirits, and how his wild wit even yet, as in its prime, wantons! playing at will its *virgin* fancies, till Care herself comes from her cell, and sitting by the side of Joy, loses her name, and forgets her nature, and joins in glee or catch, beneath the power of that magician, the merriest in the hall."—*Noctes*, No. lxvi. 1834.

"A gentleman who served with our army in the Spanish campaigns, and has painted several wild scenes of the Pyrenees in a most original manner. He is, I imagine, the very finest painter of sky since Salvator Rosa."—*Letters on the Living Artists of Scotland.*

the shop to-day, and is well, having been ill with cholera or colic. The Magazine is in a sad state, and entirely behind, and as yet I have done little to forward it. I am not quite *incog.*, I fear, but have avoided seeing any of my old friends of the Parliament House. I will write by Sunday's mail, so you will hear from me on *Tuesday*, telling you when to send the gig to Innerleithen. I think it will be on Wednesday night, therefore keep it disengaged for that day; but I will mention particulars in my next. My face is swelled, but not so bad as before nearly. The Whigs are all *in* again, or rather were never out, except Lord Grey, who remains out. Poor Blackwood looks as well as ever, and there seem to be hopes, but the disease is very, very bad, and I do not know what to say. Love to all. Yours ever affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

"*Saturday Evening.*

"MY DEAR MAGGIE,—Mr. Blackwood is in the same state, wearing away gradually, but living longer than any of the medical people thought possible. Last Sunday, it was thought he could not live many hours.

"I enclose £10 for present use, and shall write to your mamma on Monday, so that you will hear from me on Wednesday.

"This goes by Ebenezer Hogg, and two other letters; and Nancy, I understand, is sending clothes to Bonjeddard, from which I gather you are going to the ball, which is right. Love to all. Use the gig as you choose, for I shall not want it for some time.—Thine affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

"GLOUCESTER PLACE, *Monday Evening.*

"MY DEAR JANE,—I shall be in Innerleithen on Thursday per coach, so let the gig be there the night before. I have been writing here since Friday, with but indifferent success, and am at this hour worn out. Nancy has done what I asked her to do, and I have let the bell ring 10,000 times without minding it.

"Billy called, with Captain Craigie, on Sunday, and, after viewing them from the bedroom window, I let them in. I have seen nobody else, not even Sym, but intend to call to-morrow night. I have slept here, and in utter desolation, as at Blackwood's it was too mournful to go there.

"What is to become of next Magazine I do not know. If I come here again, I will bring Maggie with me. Five hours of writing give me a headache, and worse, and I become useless. I do not think Blackwood will recover, but Liston speaks still as if he had hopes. Nobody writes for the Magazine, and the lads are in very low spirits, but show much that is amiable. I believe Hogg and his wife and I will be in the coach on Thursday morning to Innerleithen; so Bob told me. The printers are waiting for MS., and I have none but a few pages to give them; but on Wednesday night all must be at press. I hope to find you all well and happy.—Yours ever affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

Mr. Blackwood died on the 16th of September 1834. "Four months of suffering, in part intense, exhausted by slow degrees all his physical energies, but left his temper calm and unruffled, and his intellect entire and

vigorous even to the last. He had thus what no good man will consider as a slight privilege, that of contemplating the approach of death with the clearness and full strength of his mind and faculties, and of instructing those around him by solemn precept and memorable example, by what means alone humanity, conscious of its own frailty, can sustain that prospect with humble serenity."[1] This event made no change in my father's relations with the Magazine, but two years later a trial came that deadened his interest, and the willingness of his hand to work.

"What is to become of next Magazine?" was the question on Monday evening, while the printers were waiting for MS., and he had but a few pages to give them. How he worked that night and next two days may be seen by examining the number of the Magazine for October, of which he wrote with his own hand 56 out of the 142 pages required. His articles were: "A Glance at the Noctes of Athenæus;" and a "Review of Coleridge's Poetical Works."

For the remainder of this year, and for the two subsequent years, he gave the most unequivocal proofs of his regard for his friend's memory, and his interest in his family, by continuing his labours with unflagging industry. In glancing over his contributions for 1835, I perceive that in January he had three; in February five; in March two; in May two; in July five; in August four; in September three; and in October and November one in each month, making a total of twenty-six articles during the twelve months. Of all these

[1] *Blackwood*, October 1837.

criticisms I have only space to allude to the very brilliant series of papers on Spenser, regarding which Mr. Hallam remarks that "It has been justly observed by a living writer of the most ardent and enthusiastic genius, whose eloquence is as the rush of mighty waters, and has left it for others almost as invidious to praise in terms of less rapture, as to censure what he has borne along in the stream of unhesitating eulogy, that 'no poet has ever had a more exquisite sense of the beautiful than Spenser.'"[1]

In 1836 and 1837, he continued to contribute an article at least once a month until his own great loss paralysed him.

The following letters were written in the autumn of 1835 from the banks of the Clyde :—

"THE BATHS, HELENSBURGH,
1835, *Tuesday*, 12 *o'clock*.

"MY DEAR JANE,—I dined with Miss Sym on Sunday, and was kindly received by her and Mr. Andrew.

"Dinner was over (half-past four), but the Howtowdy and pigeon-pie brought back, and having cast the coat to it, much to the old lady's amusement, I made a feast. I left Glasgow at half-past six on Thursday morning, and reached Helensburgh about nine. I forgot to say that Blair was at the Mearns, so I did not see him. Monday (that is yesterday) was a broiling day without wind; not a breath till about twelve, when some yachts started for a cup; the heat was intense, though there was a canopy over the *Orion*,

[1] *Literature of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 136.

in which the party was gathered. We had everything good in the upper and lower jaw-most line; and the champagne—a wine I like—flew like winking. This continued till six o'clock, and I had a mortal headache. Race won by the 'Clarence' (her seventh cup this summer), the 'Amethyst' (Smith's yacht) being beaten. At seven we sat down forty-five to dinner in the Baths, so the hotel is called, and we had a pleasant party enough, as far as the heat would suffer."

"LARGS, *Sunday, August* 2, 1835.

"MY DEAR MAGG!—I duly received the governess's letter, and write now to say that two gentlemen are to dine with us in Gloucester Place on Wednesday first, viz., Wednesday, August 5th, at six o'clock. Get us a good dinner. It was my intention to write a long letter about *us*, but how can I? We have all been at church, and the room is filled with people, and the post goes in an hour. Blair and Frank Wilson, and Willy Sym came down per steamer last night, and return to Glasgow to-morrow morning, but Blair has no intention, as far as I know, of returning to Edinburgh. I have just seen him, and no more. The Regatta is over, and Umbs was at the ball here; 200 people present. To-day is a storm. To-morrow I hope to get to Glasgow, and be home to dinner on Tuesday per mail—sooner not possible—so do try all of you to be contented till then without me. All are well.—Your affectionate father,

"JOHN WILSON,

"Who sends love to the lave, chickens and dogs included."

In August 1836, the Professor, with his wife and two eldest daughters, visited Paisley, where a public dinner was given to him, to which he was accompanied by his friend Thomas Campbell. The meeting was numerously attended, and went off with *éclat*. The following note to Mr. Findlay accompanied a report of the speeches on this occasion :—

"6, GLOUCESTER PLACE, *September* 1.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The pen is idle; not cold the heart! I forget not ever the friends of my heart. This report is a very imperfect one, but I thought you might not dislike to see it. I *will* write very soon, and at length. We are all well, and unite in kindest regards and remembrances.—Ever yours most affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

As an illustration of his humorous post-prandial speeches, I give an extract from the report:—"Mr. Campbell had been pleased to give them an animated character of his physical power; all he would say was that nature had blessed him with a sound mind in a sound body, and he had felt her kindness in this, that it had enabled him in his travels and wanderings to move with independence and freedom from all the restraints that weakness of body might imply. He remembered seeing it mentioned in the public prints some years ago that he resembled the wild man of the wood, but little did he dream that at last he was to grow into a resemblance of their immortal Wallace." After some further observations, in which the learned Professor spoke warmly and eloquently of the genius

of Mr. Campbell, he referred to the remarks of that gentleman about the circles of reputation that surrounded him, and his reception at the dinner of the Campbell Club. Perhaps, he observed, it was not so great an achievement for Mr. Campbell to come 400 miles to receive the honours awaiting him, as it was for him (Mr. W.) to go forty miles to see those honours bestowed upon him; while the little discharge of applause with which his appearance was welcomed, was to be regarded only as a humble tribute due to Mr. Campbell's superior artillery. He gave Mr. Campbell willingly the possession of all the outer circles. He gave him London—undisputed possession of London—also of Edinburgh; he did not ask for Glasgow; but here in Paisley (tremendous cheering which drowned the rest of the sentence), they would agree with the justice of the sentiment, when he said that had he been born in the poorest village in the land, he would not have cause to be ashamed of his birthplace; nor, he trusted, would his birthplace have cause to be ashamed of him (cheers). But when he considered where he was born—the town of Paisley—where he had that morning walked along the front of his father's house—itself no insignificant mansion—a town of the very best size—not like the great unwieldy Glasgow, or Edinburgh, where (while fears were entertained of the failure of the crops in the country) a crop was going on in the streets of the city (cheers and laughter), but turned he to his native town, "Ah, seest'u! seest'u!"[1]

[1] This is a Paisley expression peculiar to the people, and means "Seest thou, seest thou?"

(tremendous cheering and laughter.) Politics were very properly excluded from that meeting, etc. etc.

After the festivities at Paisley were over, they took a short excursion to Loch Lomond, Glen Falloch, Killin, Loch Earn, Crieff, Comrie, Perth, and homewards; nor was it then imagined that one of that happy party was so soon to be removed from the honoured and loved place she held in her family.

On New Year's day 1837, my mother wrote her last letter to her dearly loved sister; and the correspondence, which had continued without interruption for twenty-five years, was now to cease :—

"MY DEAR MARY,—With the exception of Mr. Wilson, we are nearly as well as usual. I cannot get Mr. W. to take proper care of himself; he would put you out of all patience, as he really does me, and neither scolding nor persuasion avail, and I am obliged to submit, and so must he; he consents to stay in the house, which is one comfort, and therefore I trust his cough will soon disappear.

"Frank says the preparations in Glasgow for the reception of Sir R. Peel will be splendid. Mr. Wilson and John will be both there. I believe there will be at least 2000 at the dinner, and the demand for tickets is unprecedented. I will take care to send you a newspaper, with the best account of the meeting that can be had. There is some anticipation, I hear, that the Radicals will try to make some disturbance, but there is no fear but their attempts will be soon put a stop to.

"I am just now reading a delightful book; if you have not already seen it, pray try and get it; it is Prior's

'*Life of Goldsmith.*' Do you remember how you used to like Goldsmith? and I never read a line of this book without thinking of you, and wishing we were reading it together. You will love him better than ever after reading these Memoirs.

"A thousand thanks for your welcome letter, and for all the good and kind wishes therein contained. In return, pray accept all our united and most cordial wishes, which are offered in all sincerity and affection to yourself and all our well-beloved friends at Penny Bridge, that you may enjoy many, many happy returns of this blessed season.—Your affectionate sister, J. WILSON."

My mother's illness was not at first of a nature to alarm the family; but my father was always nervous about her, when anything more than usual disturbed her health; she had been for some years delicate, and took less exercise than was perhaps for her good. We thought that the little tour, made in the autumn of 1836, had been very beneficial, and hoped that this would in future tempt her to move more frequently from home. About the middle of March, little more than two months after sending an affectionate greeting at the beginning of a new year to the beloved friends at Penny Bridge, she was taken ill with a feverish cold, which, after a few days, turned to a malady beyond the aid of human skill. Water on the chest was the ultimate cause of her death, which sad event took place on the 29th of March, and was communicated to her sister Mary in the following touching letter by a relative, who could well understand the irreparable loss that had be-

fallen husband and children by the passing away of this gentle spirit :—

" My letter, written last night, will have prepared you to hear that our worst fears have been confirmed ; our dearest Jane expired last night at half-past twelve o'clock. Immediately after writing to you, I went, along with my husband, to Glo'ster Place, trusting that she might once more know me. She had been sleeping heavily for two or three hours, but when I went into her room, she was breathing softer though shorter, and a kind of hope seized upon me. The physician had ordered a cordial to be given her every hour; for this purpose it was necessary to rouse her from her sleep, and it was at this time a trial was to be made whether she would know me ; how anxiously I hoped to exchange one kind look with her, to kiss her again, but it was not God's will it should be so. Her husband was just going to raise her head, that he might enable her to taste the draught, when she breathed three sighs, with short intervals, and all was over before we who were around her bed could believe it possible that her spirit had fled. We were stunned with the unexpected stroke, for none of us had anticipated any change last night. The Professor was seized with a sort of half delirium, and you can scarcely picture a more distressing scene than him lying on the floor, his son John weeping over him, and the poor girls in equal distress. His first words were those of prayer ; after that he spoke incessantly the whole night, and seemed to recapitulate the events of many years in a few hours. They were all calmer this morning. Maggy tells me that she

scarcely ever spoke except when addressed; that she did not think herself in danger, and had even yesterday morning spoken of getting better. But she did not know any of them, at all times, for the last day or two, and I believe, *none* of them *yesterday*. The funeral, I believe, will take place on Saturday. God bless you both ;—with kindest love to all."

So passed away from this earth the spirit of his idolized wife, leaving the world thenceforth for him dark and dreary. This bereavement overwhelmed him with grief, almost depriving him of reason, nor, when the excess of sorrow passed away, did mourning ever entirely leave his heart. When he resumed his duties next session, he met his class with a depressed and solemn spirit, unable at first to give utterance to words, for he saw that he had with him the sympathy and tender respect of his students. After a short pause, his voice tremulous with emotion, he said, "Gentlemen, pardon me, but since we last met, I have been in the valley of the shadow of death."

CHAPTER XV.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1837–44.

"PICTURES and visions which fancy had drawn and happy love had inspired, came now in fierce torrent of recollection over the prostrate and afflicted soul. Though sorrow had no part in them before, it possesses them now. Thus, one idea, and the pain which is now inseparable from it, reign over all changes of thought—though these thoughts in themselves have been fixed in their connexion with one another, and image linked to image long before; they rise up by those connexions, but they are determined to arise and depart by that one fixed conception which holds its unshaken seat in the sorrow of the soul."[1] It is quite evident from these words, written a year after that great domestic affliction had befallen him, that my father had not shut out from his heart the image of his wife. How he thought and felt at the moment when the shadow of death darkened his life, may be gathered from the following touching lines copied from the public journals of the day :—

"Last week a paragraph appeared describing the painful situation to which Professor Wilson had been

[1] "Our Two Vases," *Blackwood*, April 1838.

reduced from deep mental affliction. The following extract from a letter to a friend, written by himself, is the best evidence of the error into which our contemporary had fallen :—

" 'It pleased God on the 29th of March to visit me with the severest calamity that can befall one of his creatures, in the death of my wife, with whom I had lived in love for twenty-six years, and from that event till about a fortnight ago, I lived with my family, two sons and three daughters, dutiful and affectionate, in a secluded house near Roslin. I am now in Edinburgh, and early in November hope to resume my daily duties in the University. I have many blessings for which I am humbly thankful to the Almighty, and though I have not borne my affliction so well, or better than I have done, yet I have borne it with submission and resignation, and feel that though this world is darkened, I may be able yet to exert such faculties, humble as they are, as God has given me, if not to the benefit, not to the detriment of my fellow-mortals.' "

That letter leads one irresistibly back to one written in May 1811, when he stood on the threshold of a new life full of anticipated happiness. Where was that solemn, calm spirit, now that she—the best and gentlest of wives—was gone? Did he say, " Comfort's in heaven, and we on earth?" True it was, he suffered as such a soul must suffer at such a loss, and it was for a long time a terrible storm of trouble. But he gave evidence in due time that he was not for ever to be overcome with sadness.

It is necessary, in order to relate some of the events of this summer, that we should follow him to the secluded house near Roslin, where he went immediately after my mother's death, doubtless hoping to find, as he had done of old, some comfort in communion with outward nature. It was Spring too, his very love for which carried with it a vague presage of evil.

> "Yea! mournful thoughts like these even now arise,
> While spring, like Nature's smiling infancy,
> Sports round me, and all images of peace
> Seem native to this earth, nor other home
> Desire or know; yet doth a mystic chain
> Link in our hearts foreboding fears of death,
> With every loveliest thing that seems to us
> Most deeply fraught with life."

Thus did he meet the fair season so loved of old, sighing—

> "O the heavy change, now thou art gone;
> Now thou art gone, and never must return!"

I may observe here, without any unfilial disrespect, that his deep sorrow was not without its good influence on the sufferer. Those who had known him were well aware of the sincerity of his religious belief, and of his solemn and silent adoration of the Saviour; but it was observed from this time that his faith exercised a more constant sway over his actions. The tone of his writings is higher, and they contain almost unceasing aspirations after the spiritual. The same humility, which in a singular degree now made him so modest and unobtrusive with the public, ordered all his ways in private life. The humble opinion he had of himself could have arisen from no other source than from reverence to God, whose servant he felt himself to be, and debtor beyond

all for possession of those gifts which, in the diffidence of his soul, he hoped he had used, "if not for the benefit, not for the detriment of his fellow-mortals." As a specimen of his thoughts, and as introductory to the life of peace and charity which he led in his seclusion at Roslin, I refer my readers to a noble passage on Intellect;[1] it forms a touching contrast to the simplicity and tenderness of disposition which caused him to turn aside from these lofty communings to the common humanities of nature. He was well known in the houses of the poor. No humble friend was ever cast aside if honest and upright. During the summer, an old servant of my mother's, who had formerly lived many years in her service, had fallen into bad health, and was ordered change of air. She was at once invited to Roslin, and Jessie willingly availed herself of my father's kindness and came to his house; but the change was of little service; consumption had taken firm hold, and soon the poor invalid was confined to bed never more to rise. That she was considerately attended and soothed during those long watches—the sad accompaniment of this lingering disease—was only what was to have been expected, but it was no unfrequent sight to see my father, as early dawn streaked the sky, sitting by the bed-side of the dying woman, arranging with gentle but awkward hand the pillow beneath her head, or cheering her with encouraging words, and reading, when she desired it, those portions of the Bible most suitable to her need. When she died, her master laid her head in the grave in Lasswade churchyard.

[1] "Our Pocket Companions," *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. xliv. 1838.

This whole season was burdened with one feeling, which tinged all he wrote, and never quite left him.[1] In October, he returned to Edinburgh and resumed his college duties, how, we have already seen in Mr. Smith's reminiscences. About this time circumstances occurred that in a measure removed the gloom which had settled upon his mind. Two of his daughters were married,[2] and

[1] "There is another incident of that period which brings out the profound emotion in a way too characteristically singular to be repeated, were it not known beyond the private circle:—how two pet dogs, special favourites of Mrs. Wilson's, having got astray within the preserve-grounds of an estate near which their owner was then staying in the country, were shot by the son of the proprietor, while engaged in field-sports with other gentlemen, and were afterwards ascertained, to their extreme regret, to belong to Professor Wilson, to whom they sent an immediate explanation, hastening to follow it up afterwards by apologies in person. His indignation, however, it is said, was uncontrollable, and we can conceive that leonine aspect in its prime—dilating, flaming, flushed with the sudden distraction of a grief that became rage, seeing nothing before it but the embodiment, as it were, of the great destroyer. The occasion, it was gravely argued by a mediator, was one for the display of magnanimity. 'MAGNANIMITY!' was the emphatic reply,—'Why, sir, I showed the utmost magnanimity this morning when one of the murderers was in this very room, and I did not pitch him out of the window!' As murder he accordingly persisted in regarding it, with a sullen obstinate desire for justice, which required no small degree of management on the part of friends, and of propitiation from the culprits, to prevent his making it a public matter. Untrained to calamity, like Lear, when all at once—

> 'The king is mad! how stiff is our vile sense
> That we stand up, and have ingenious feeling
> Of our huge sorrows! Better we were distract:
> So should our thoughts be severed from our griefs;
> And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
> The knowledge of themselves.'"

—From Mr. Cupple's graceful "*Memorial and Estimate of Professor Wilson, by a Student.*" 4to. Edinburgh.

[2] The eldest, Margaret Anne, to her cousin, Mr. J. F. Ferrier, now Professor of Moral Philosophy, St. Andrews; the second, Mary, to Mr. J. T. Gordon, now Sheriff of Midlothian.

the pleasant interchange of social civilities, which generally takes place on these occasions, led him into a wider circle of friends than formerly. By the marriage of his second daughter, who, along with her husband, found a home for eleven years in her father's house, a change was wrought in the feelings of some of the chief men of the Whig party towards him. It has already been shown to what an extent the bitterness of party spirit had separated good men and true from each other, not only in public matters but in private life. That spirit was now dying out, and the alienation which had for some years existed, more through force of habit than inclination, was soon to cease, as far as my father was concerned. Mr. Gordon was a Whig, and connected with Whig families; he introduced to his father-in-law's house new visitors and new elements of thought; old prejudices disappeared, and "Christopher North" was frequently seen in the midst of what once was to his own party the camp of the enemy. Many a pleasant day they spent in each other's houses; and no observer, however dull, could fail to be struck even by the aspect of the four men who thus again met together, Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherfurd, and Wilson. I think I may venture, without partiality, to say that my father was the most remarkable of the four. There was a certain similarity of bearing and manner in the three great lawyers which was not shared by him: he was evidently not one of the family. I shall never forget his manly voice, pleasantly contrasting with Jeffrey's sharp silvery tones, as they mingled sparkling wit with their more serious discourse, which was enlivened by

the quaint humour and Doric notes of Cockburn, that type of the old Scottish gentleman, whose dignified yet homely manner and solemn beauty gave his aspect a peculiar grace,—Rutherfurd also, to whose large mind, consummate ability, rich and ripe endowments, I most willingly pay a most sincere and affectionate tribute of true regard and respect.[1] It will not do for me to dwell on these things, however pleasant to myself would be a digression into this fairy-land of reminiscence.[2]

My father, since the days when he wrote in the *Edinburgh*, had achieved a position in letters, not only different from Jeffrey's, but higher and more enduring. As a critic, he had worked in a deeper mine than the Edinburgh Reviewer, dealing less with mere forms, and more with the true spirit of art.

His great work, indeed, was that which to me seems

[1] The mutual appreciation and familiar friendship of Wilson and Rutherfurd was as instant as are question and answer to-day by telegraph; and I cannot now recall, without emotion, the fond and constant attachment which the great and busy lawyer felt and manifested to "Christopher North." I have before me at this moment letter after letter, written during a course of years to my husband from his uncle in London, in the din of the heaviest seasons of official duty, not one of which ever concludes without some special message to or inquiry about "the Professor."

[2] Nobody, however, will grudge me a few words in honour of that amiable and admirable man, the late Lord Murray, who may be said to have lived in the open air of universal and cheerful hospitality. His heart and his hearth were alike open, with an equal warmth of welcome, to all, old and young, big or little. None understood or relished better than he did the joyous benevolence of my father's disposition. I wish I could linger a little over the agreeable *réunions* in Jeffrey's house in his latter years, which, under the mellowed lustre of a simple domestic fireside, rivalled the sprightliest fascinations of a Hôtel Rambouillet. No friend went to them, or was there greeted, with more cordial sympathy than Professor Wilson.

the highest destiny of man, to teach; and his lessons have spread far and near. In the limitations of his genius lay its excellence; it made him patriotic; and if, for example, his name is not linked with individual creations of character such as bind the name of Goethe with Faust or Werther or Wilhelm Meister, yet his immediate influence extends over a wider sphere of life. These creations of the great German, though quite accordant with nature, speak but to a high order of cultivation. They are works containing a spirit and action of life, the sympathies of which can never enter the hut of the peasant or the homes of the poor. On the other hand, Wilson is thoroughly patriotic; there is not a class in the whole of Scotland incapable of enjoying his writings; and I believe his influence in the habits and modes of thought on every subject, grave or gay, is felt throughout the country. Be it politics, literature, or sport, there is not one of these themes that has not taken colour from him,—a sure test of genius. In the "Noctes" alone is seen his creative power in individual character; yet its most original conception is not a type, but a being of time and place. The Shepherd is not to be found everywhere in Scotland, either sitting at feasts, or tending his flocks on the hill-side. We are not familiar with him as we are with the characters of Charles Dickens. We have to imagine the one; we see and know the others. Christopher himself is typical of what has been; he presides at these meetings when philosophy mounts high, with the dignity of a minister of blue-eyed Athene. The spirit of the Greek school is upon him, and we can

fancy, that, before assembling his companions together, he invoked the gods for eloquence and wisdom. There he was great; but in his tales, his *Recreations*, and his poetry, the true nature of the man, as he lived at home, is to be found. In the simple ways of his daily life, I see him as he sometimes used to be, in his own room, surrounded by his family,—the prestige of greatness laid aside, and the very strength of his hand softened, that he might gently caress the infant on his knee, and play with the little ones at his feet. And many a game was played with fun and frolic; stories were told, *barley-sugar* was eaten, and feasts of various kinds given. "A party in grandpapa's room" was ever hailed with delight. There was to be seen a tempting display of figs, raisins, cakes, and other good things, all laid out on a table set and covered by himself; while he, acting on the occasion as waiter, was ordered about in the most unceremonious fashion. After a while, when childhood was passing away from the frolics of the nursery, and venturing to explore the mysteries of life, he would speak to his little friends as companions, and passing from gay to grave, led their young spirits on, and bound their hearts to his.

In speaking of his kindness to *human pets*, I may mention a very delightful instance of his love to the inferior animals. I remember a hapless sparrow being found lying on the door-steps scarcely fledged, and quite unable to do for itself. It was brought into the house, and from that moment became a *protégé* of my father's. It found a lodging in his room, and ere long was perfectly domesticated, leading a life of uninterrupted

peace and prosperity for nearly eleven years. It seemed quite of opinion that it was the most important occupant of the apartment, and would peck and chirp where it liked, not unfrequently nestling in the folds of its patron's waistcoat, attracted by the warmth it found there. Then with bolder stroke of familiarity, it would hop upon his shoulder, and picking off some straggling hair from the long locks hanging about his neck, would jump away to its cage, and depositing the treasure with an air of triumph, return to fresh conquest quite certain of welcome. The creature seemed positively influenced by constant association with its master. It grew in *stature*, and began to assume a noble and defiant look. It was alleged, in fact, that he was gradually becoming an *eagle*.

Of his dogs, their name was Legion. I remember Brontë, Rover, Fang, Paris, Charlie, Fido, Tip, and Grog, besides outsiders without number.

Brontë comes first on the list. He came, I think, into the family in the year 1826, a soft, shapeless mass of puppyhood, and grew up a beautiful Newfoundland dog. "Purple-black was he all over, except the star on his breast, as the raven's wing. Strength and sagacity emboldened his bounding beauty, and a fierceness lay deep down within the quiet lustre o' his een that tauld you, even when he laid his head upon your knees, and smiled up to your face like a verra intellectual and moral creature—as he was—that had he been angered, he could have torn in pieces a lion."[1] He was brave and gentle in disposition, and we all loved him, but he

[1] *Noctes*, vol. ii. pp. 185-195.

was my father's peculiar property, of which he was, by the way, quite aware; he evinced for him a constancy that gained in return the confidence and affection of his master. Every day for several years did Brontë walk by his side to and from the College, where he was soon as well known as the Professor himself. This fine dog came to an untimely end. There was good reason to believe that he had been poisoned by some members of Dr. Knox's class, in revenge for the remarks made by my father on the Burke and Hare murders.[1] I remember the morning we missed Brontë from the breakfast-room, a half-formed presentiment told us that something was wrong; we called, but no bounding step answered the summons. I went to look for him in the schoolroom, and there he lay lifeless. I could not believe it, and touched him gently with my foot; he did not move. I bent down and laid my hand on his head, but it was cold; poor Brontë was dead! "No bark like his now belongs to the world of sound;" and so passed Brontë "to the land of hereafter." It was some time ere he found a successor; but there was no living without dogs, and the next was Rover, of whom I have already spoken.

The house in Gloucester Place was a rendezvous for all kinds of dogs. My father's kindliness of nature made him open his house for his four-footed friends, who were too numerous to describe. There was Professor Jameson's Neptune, a Newfoundland dog, Mrs. Rutherfurd's Juba, a pet spaniel, and Wasp, a Dandy Dinmont, belonging to Lord Rutherfurd, who were con-

[1] *Noctes*, vol. iii. p. 15.

stant visitors; but the most notorious *sorner* of the whole party was Tory, brother to Fang, both sons of Mr. Blackwood's famous dog, Tickler. Tory paid his visits with the cool assurance of a man of the world, the agreeableness of whose society was not to be questioned for a moment; he remained as long as he wished, was civil and good-humoured to every one, but, as a matter of course, selected the master of the house as his chief companion, walked with him, and patronized him. I think he looked upon himself as the binding link between the bitter Tory of the old *régime*, and the moderate Conservative of the new. There was evidently a feeling of partisanship in his mind as he took up his position at the door of Mr. Blackwood's shop, either to throw the Professor off or take him up, as the case might be. I never knew so eccentric a dog as Tory; he had many friends, but his ways were queer and wandering. There was no place of public amusement he did not attend; his principles were decidedly those of a dog about town; and though serious, grave, and composed in deportment, he preferred stir and excitement to rest and decorum. Tory was never known to go to church, but at the door of the Theatre, or at the Assembly Rooms, he has been seen to linger for hours. He was a long-backed yellow terrier, with his front feet slightly turned out, and an expression of countenance full of mildness and wisdom. Tory continued his visits to Gloucester Place, and his friendship for the Professor, for several years, but he did not neglect other friends, for he exhibited his partiality for many individuals in the street, accompanying them in their walk, and per-

haps going home with them. This erratic and independent mode of existence brought him much into notice. There must be many in Edinburgh who remember his knowing look and strange habits.

One other such companion must be mentioned, the last my father ever had; he belonged to his son Blair, and was originally the property of a cab-driver in Edinburgh. Grog was his name, and it argues the unpoetical position he held in early life. He was the meekest and gentlest, and almost the smallest doggie I ever saw. His colour was a rich chestnut brown; his coat, smooth and short, might be compared to the wing of a pheasant; and as he lay nestling in the sofa, he looked much more like a bird than a dog. I think he never followed my father in the street, their intimacy being confined entirely to domestic life; he was too *petit* to venture near Christopher as he strode along the street, but many a little snooze he took within the folds of his ample coat, or in the pocket of his jacket, or sometimes on the table among his papers. I cannot pretend to say of what breed Grog had come; he had little, comical, turned-out feet; he was a cosy, coaxing, mysterious, half-mouse, half-bird-like dog; a fancy article, and might have been bought very fitly from a bazaar of lady's work, made up for the occasion, and sold at a high price on account of his rarity. He died easily, being found one morning on his master's pillow lifeless; his little heart had ceased to beat during the night. The Professor was very sad when he died, and vowed he never would have any more dogs, —and he kept his vow.

In connexion with this subject, there remains something to be said of his continued devotion to the birds mentioned in an earlier part of this Memoir. I think it was the love of the beautiful in all created things that made my father admire the glossy plumage, delicate snake-like head, and noble air of game birds—the aristocracy of their species. For many months he pampered and fed no fewer than *sixty-two* of these precious bipeds in the back-green of his house. The noise made by this fearful regiment of birds beggars all description, yet, be it said, for the honour of human patience and courtesy, not a single complaint ever came from friend or neighbour; for months it went on, and still this

"Bufera infernal"

was listened to in silence.[1]

Fearing lest any of his pets should expand their wings and take flight, their master sought to prevent this by clipping a wing of each. He chanced to fix upon a day for this operation when his son-in-law, Mr. Gordon, was occupied in his room with his clerk, the apartment adjoining which was the place of rendezvous. Chanticleer, at no time "most musical, most melancholy" of birds, on this occasion made noise enough to

[1] His medical attendant naïvely relates that one day when the Professor took him into his "aviary," and pointed out the varied beauties of his birds, the Doctor asked, "Do they never fight?" "Fight!" replied the Professor, "you little know the noble nature of the animal; he will not fight unless he is incited; but," added he with a humorous twinkle of the eye, "put a hen among them, and I won't answer for the peace being long observed;——and so it hath been since the beginning of the world," added the old man eloquent.

"create a soul under the ribs of death." Such an uproar! sounds of fluttering of feathers, accompanied by low chucklings, half hysterical cackling, suppressed crowing, and every sign of agitation and rage that lungs not human could send forth. During the whole of this proceeding, extraordinary as it may have appeared to the uninitiated ear, not an observation escaped the lips of the clerk, who for more than an hour was subjected to "this lively din."

If, however, the silence of neighbours did honour to their virtue, there were distresses and perplexities which domestic tongues found no difficulty in expressing. Two of the birds fell sick, and change of air was considered necessary for their restoration to health. A happy thought suggested to the Professor, that an hospital might be found for the invalids in a room of the attic storey, where boxes and various unused articles of the *ménage* were kept, in short, the lumber-room, not unfrequently, however, a repository for very valuable articles,—so far belying its name. In this apartment, for more than a week, walked in undisturbed quiet the two invalids, tended, fed, and visited many times during each day by their watchful patron. Health by those means was restored, and nothing now remained but to remove the pets to their old abode in the back-green, where they crowed and strutted more insolently than ever. A few days after the lumber-room had been evacuated by its feathered tenants, the Professor's daughters ascended to the said apartment, happy in the possession there—secure in a well-papered trunk,—of certain beautiful ball-dresses to be worn that

very night in all the freshness of unsullied crape and ribbons. What sight met their eyes on opening the door of the room! Horrible to say, the elegant dresses were lying on the floor in a corner, soiled, torn, and crumpled, in fact useless. The box in which they had been so carefully laid, had been, on account of its size, at once secured by the Professor as an eligible coop for his birds. The dresses were of no value in his eyes; probably he did not know what they were; so tossing them ruthlessly out, he left them to their fate. It was quite evident, from the appearance they presented, that along with the empty trunk—according to the caprice of the fowls—they had been used as a *nest*. To imagine the feelings of the young ladies at the sight of their fair vanities, "all tattered and torn," is to call up a subject which, even at this distant date, causes a natural pang. It was a trial certainly not borne with much patience, and no doubt, in the hour of disappointment, called forth expressions of bitter and undisguised hatred towards all animated nature in the shape of *feathers*. The *aviary* was after a time shut up, and all its inhabitants were sent off in various directions. The following note to Dr. Moir will show how they were disposed of:—

"6, GLOUCESTER PLACE, *Monday*.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have a game cock of great value which I wish to walk (as it is technically termed) for a few months. Can you take him in? This will depend entirely on your setting any value on the bird you now may have, and who, I presume, is Dunghill.

If you do, on no account displace him from his own throne. If you do not, I will bring mine down on Thursday, and see him safely deposited in your back court. In that case, his present majesty must either be put to death or expatriated, as if put together they will fall by mutual wounds.—Yours affectionately,

"J. WILSON."

Apparently the only article from his pen during 1840 in *Blackwood* was a review of "A Legend of Florence," by Leigh Hunt. If he had not long ere that made the *amende honorable* for the unjust bitterness of the past, he certainly in this review used "the gracious tact, the Christian art," to heal all wounds, illustrating finely his own memorable words, "The *animosities* are mortal, but the *humanities* live for ever."

Preparatory to beginning an essay upon Burns, which he had engaged to write for the Messrs. Blackie, he was desirous to seek the best domestic traces of him that could be found, and naturally turned to Dumfriesshire for such information. Two interesting letters to Mr. Thomas Aird, will, better than words of mine, show how earnestly he set about his work, although I cannot, at the same time, avoid drawing attention to certain expressions of anxious interest concerning the better part of the man. For example, his desire to hear "if Burns was a church-goer, regular or irregular, and to what church." All his inquiries show a tender sympathy, a Christian desire to place that erring spirit justly before men, for well did he know how in this world faults are judged. There is a

touching simplicity, too, in the personal allusions in these words, "*Her* eyes never having looked on the Nith."

"*May* 3, 1840.

"MY DEAR MR. AIRD,—I have been ill with rose in my head for more than a fortnight, and it is still among the roots of my hair, but in about a week or so, I think I shall be able to move in the open air without danger. I have a leaning towards Dumfriesshire, it being unhaunted by the past, or less haunted than almost any other place, *her* eyes never having looked on the Nith. Perhaps thereabouts I might move, and there find an hour of peace. Is Thornhill a pleasant village? and is there an inn between it and Dumfries? Is there an inn in the pass of Dalvine? Is Penpont habitable quietly for a few days, or any of the pretty village-inns in that district? Pray let me hear from you at your leisure *how the land lies.* Perhaps I may afterwards step down to your town for a day, but I wish, if I make out a week's visit to Nithsdale or neighbourhood, to do so unknown but to yourself.—Affectionately yours,

"JOHN WILSON."

Four months later we find him writing again to the same friend:—

"EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 24, 1840.

"MY DEAR MR. AIRD,—I have at last set to work—if that be not too strong an assertion—on my paper about Burns, so long promised to the Messrs. Blackie of Glasgow, for *The Land of Burns.* They have in hand about fifty printed quarto pages, but some of it has not

been returned to me to correct for press. They expect, I believe, thirty or fifty more.

"Can you find out from good authority in Dumfries (Jessie Lewars, they say, is yet alive, and is Mrs. Thomson) if Burns was a church-goer at Dumfries, regular or irregular, and to what church? 2. If he was on habits of intimacy with any clergyman or clergymen in the town—as, for example, Dr. Burnside? In 1803, I stayed two days with the Burnsides—all dear friends of mine *then*, and long afterwards, though *now* the survivors are to me like the dead. I then called with Mary Burnside,[1] now Mrs. Taylor, in Liverpool, on Mrs. Burns. Robert I remember at Glasgow College, but hardly knew him, and I daresay he does not remember me. 3. Did any clergyman visit him on his dying bed; and is it supposed that when dying the Bible was read by him more than formerly or not? 4. Had Burns frequent, rare, or regular family worship at Dumfries? At Ellisland I think he often had. If these questions can be answered affirmatively in whole or in part, I shall say something about it; if not, I shall be silent, or nearly so. In either case I hope I shall say nothing wrong.

"I have not left Edinburgh since I saw you, but for a day or so, and I won't leave it till this contribution to *The Life of Burns* is finished. Then I intend going for a week to Kelso, and from the 20th October to ditto April, if spared, be in this room, misnamed a study—it is a sort of library. I am alone with one daughter, my

[1] Mary Burnside was the friend and confidante of the "Orphan Maid," whose image was so hard to tear from his young heart.

good Jane ; her mother's name, and much of her nature—but not . . .—Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

During this summer he went into Dumfries and Galloway, accompanied by his two sons. I have an interesting account of a visit he paid to the Rev. George Murray of Balmaclellan, Glenkens, with a day's fishing in Lochinvar, but it is too long for insertion.

In speaking of his room, which he calls "a sort of library," something may be said of that careless habit which overtook him in his later years, and gave to his whole appearance an air of reckless freedom. His room was a strange mixture of what may be called order and untidiness, for there was not a scrap of paper, or a book that his hand could not light upon in a moment, while to the casual eye, in search of discovery, it would appear chaos, without a chance of being cleared away.

To any one whose delight lay in beauty of furniture, or quaint and delicate ornament, well-appointed arrangements, and all that indescribable fascination caught from *nick-nacks* and articles of *vertu*, that apartment must have appeared a mere lumber-room. The book-shelves were of unpainted wood, knocked up in the rudest fashion, and their volumes, though not wanting in number or excellence, wore but shabby habiliments, many of them being tattered and without backs. The chief pieces of furniture in this room were two cases : one containing specimens of foreign birds, a gift from an admirer of his genius across the Atlantic, which was used incongruously enough sometimes as a

wardrobe; the other was a book-case, but not entirely devoted to books; its glass doors permitted a motley assortment of articles to be seen. The spirit, the tastes and habits of the possessor were all to be found there, side by side like a little community of domesticities.

For example, resting upon the *Wealth of Nations* lay shining coils of gut, set off by pretty pink twinings. Peeping out from *Boxiana,* in juxtaposition with the *Faëry Queen,* were no end of delicately dressed *flies;* and pocket-books well filled with gear for the "gentle craft" found company with Shakspere and Ben Jonson; while fishing-rods, in pieces, stretched their elegant length along the shelves, embracing a whole set of poets. Nor was the gravest philosophy without its contrast, and Jeremy Taylor, too, found innocent repose in the neighbourhood of a tin box of barley-sugar, excellent as when bought "at my old man's." Here and there, in the interstices between books, were stuffed what appeared to be dingy, crumpled bits of paper, —these were bank-notes, his *class fees*—not unfrequently, for want of a purse, thrust to the bottom of an old worsted stocking, when not honoured by a place in the book-case. I am certain he very rarely counted over the fees taken from his students. He never looked at or touched money in the usual way; he very often forgot where he put it; saving when these stocking banks were his humour; no one, for its own sake, or for his own purposes, ever regarded riches with such perfect indifference. He was like the old patriarch whose simple desires were comprehended in these words,—"If God will be with me, and keep me in the

way I am to go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,"—other thought of wealth he had not. And so there he sat, in the majesty of unaffected dignity, surrounded by a homeliness that still left him a type of the finest gentleman; courteous to all, easy and unembarrassed in address, wearing his *négligé* with as much grace as a courtier his lace and plumes, nor leaving other impression than that which goodness makes on minds ready to acknowledge superiority; seeing there "the elements so mixed in him, that nature might stand up and say to all the world, this was a man."

"Writing for Blackwood" were words that bore no pleasant significance to my ears in the days of childhood. Well do I remember, when living long ago in Ann Street, going to school with my sister Margaret, that, on our return from it, the first question eagerly put by us to the servant as she opened the door was, "Is papa busy to-day; is he writing for Blackwood?" If the inquiry was answered in the affirmative, then off went our shoes, and we crept up stairs like mice. I believe, generally speaking, there never was so quiet a nursery as ours. Thus "writing for Blackwood" found little favour in our eyes, and the grim old visage of Geordie Buchanan met with very rough treatment from our hands. If, as sometimes happened, a number of the Magazine found its way to the nursery, it never failed to be tossed from floor to ceiling, and back again, until tattered to our hearts' content. In due time we came to appreciate better the value of these labours, when we learned what love and duty there was in them; and a good lesson of endurance and power the

old man taught by the very manner of his work. How he set about it, *à propos* of his study, may claim a few words of description.

His habit of composition, or rather I should say the execution of it, was not always ordered best for his comfort. The amazing rapidity with which he wrote, caused him too often to delay his work to the very last moment, so that he almost always wrote under compulsion, and every second of time was of consequence. Under such a mode of labour there was no hour left for relaxation. When regularly in for an article for Blackwood, his whole strength was put forth, and it may be said he struck into life what he had to do at a blow. He at these times began to write immediately after breakfast, that meal being despatched with a swiftness commensurate with the necessity of the case before him. He then shut himself into his study, with an express command that no one was to disturb him, and he never stirred from his writing-table until perhaps the greater part of a "Noctes" was written, or some paper of equal brilliancy and interest completed. The idea of breaking his labour by taking a constitutional walk never entered his thoughts for a moment. Whatever he had to write, even though a day or two were to keep him close at work, he never interrupted his pen, saving to take his night's rest, and a late dinner served to him in his study. The hour for that meal was on these occasions nine o'clock; his dinner then consisted invariably of a boiled fowl, potatoes, and a glass of water—he allowed himself no wine. After dinner he resumed his pen till midnight,

when he retired to bed, not unfrequently to be disturbed by an early printer's boy; although sometimes, these familiars did not come often enough or early enough for their master's work,[1] as may be seen from the following note to Mr. Ballantyne :—

"The boy was told to call this morning at seven, and said he would, but he has not come till .... I rose at five this morning on purpose to have the sheets ready. I wish you could order the devils to be more punctual, as they never by any accident appear in this house at a proper time. The devil who broke his word is he who brought *the first packet last night.* The devil who brought the second, is in this blameless. I do not wish the first devil to get more than his due; but you must snub him for my sake. For a man who goes to bed at two, does not relish leaving it at five, except in case of life or death. Would you believe it, I am a *little* angry just now? J. W."

[1] That these familiars were not always so dilatory the following humorous description will testify :—"O these printers' devils! Like urchins on an ice slide *keeping the pie warm,* from cock-crow till owl-hoot do they continue in unintermitting succession to pour from the far-off office down upon Moray Place or Buchanan Lodge, one imp almost on the very shoulders of another, without a minute devil-free, crying, 'Copy! Copy!' in every variety of intonation possible in gruff or shrill; and should I chance to drop asleep over an article, worn down by protracted sufferings to mere skin and bone, as you see, till the wick of my candle—one to the pound—hangs drooping down by the side of the melting mutton, the two sunk storeys are swarming with them all a-hum! Many doubtless die during the year, but from such immense numbers they are never missed any more than the midges you massacre on a sultry summer eve. Then the face and figure of one devil are so like another's,—the people who have time to pay particular attention to their personal appearance, which I have not, say they are as different as sheep. That tipsy Thammuz is to me all one with Bowzy Beelzebub," etc.—*Noctes.*

I do not exaggerate his power of speed, when I say he wrote more in a few hours than most able writers do in a few days; examples of it I have often seen in the very manuscript before him, which, disposed on the table, was soon transferred to the more roomy space of the floor at his feet, where it lay "thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa," only to be piled up again quickly as before. When I look back to the days when he sat in that confused, dusty study, working sometimes like a slave, it seems to me as if Hood's "Song of the Shirt," with a difference of burden, would apply in its touching words to him; for it was

> "Write, write, write,
> While the cock is crowing aloof;
> And write, write, write,
> Till the stars shine through the roof;"

And so was his literature made, that delightful periodical literature which, "say of it what you will, gives light to the heads and heat to the hearts of millions of our race. The greatest and best men of the age have not disdained to belong to the Brotherhood; and thus the hovel holds what must not be missing in the hall —the furniture of the cot is the same as that of the palace; and duke and ditcher read their lessons from the same page."

He never, even in very cold weather, had a fire in his room; nor did it at night, as most apartments do, get heat from gas, which he particularly disliked, remaining faithful to the primitive candle—a large vulgar tallow, set in a suitable candlestick composed of ordinary tin, and made after the fashion of what is called

a kitchen candlestick. What his fancy for this was I cannot say, but he never did, and would not, make use of any other.

From 1840 to 1845 there were only two papers contributed by him to Blackwood, viz., the review of Leigh Hunt's *Legend of Florence*, already spoken of, and a laudatory criticism of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. The latter appeared in December 1842. This cessation from labour arose in the first instance from a paralytic affection of his right hand, which attacked him in May 1840, and disabled him for nearly a year. It was the first warning he received that his great strength and wonderful constitution lay under the same law as that which commands the weakest. Writing thenceforward became irksome, and the characters traced by his pen are almost undecipherable. This attack gradually wore away, but it was during its continuance, and for years after, that he imposed upon himself rules of total abstinence from wine and every kind of stimulant. Toast and water was the only beverage of which he partook.

I have nothing more to relate of this time, nor are there any other traces of literary occupation beyond that belonging directly to his College duties. The remaining portion of this year must be permitted to pass in silence; and not again till the summer of 1841 is there a trace of anything but what belongs to a retired and quiet life.

In June 1841, he presided at a large public dinner given in honour of Mr. Charles Dickens,[1] and immedi-

[1] Reported in *Scotsman*, June 26, 1841.

ately afterwards started for the Highlands. The following letter to Mr. Findlay recalls recollections of that delightful tour. I was then with him at Rothesay, as his communication shows, on occasion of a melancholy nature, which, however, at that period did not result as was anticipated, and left the summer months free from any other sorrow than that of anxiety. Mrs. Gordon rallied for a time, and was well enough to bear removal to Edinburgh in the autumn; but the sad condition in which she was brought friends around her, of whom my father was one; and on one of these visits to Rothesay, he made from thence a short detour by Inverary and Loch Awe, taking me with him, along with his eldest son John.

"ROTHESAY, *Thursday Night,*
July 1, 1841.

"MY DEAR ROBERT,—Gordon and I left Edinburgh suddenly by the night mail on Monday, and arrived here on Tuesday forenoon. Dr. Hay and my daughter Mary followed in the afternoon, in consequence of the illness of Mrs. Gordon, senior, who, I fear, is dying. To-day, Mary and Gordon had nearly met a fatal accident, having been upset in a car over a considerable depth among rocks on the shore-road, along with their friend Mr. Irvine, and his son. All were for a while insensible except Mary, and all have been a good deal hurt. Mary was brought home in Mrs. T. Douglas's carriage, and is going on well. In a day or two she will be quite well; and Gordon is little the worse. It was near being a fatal accident, and had a frightful look. I was not of the party. Mrs. Gordon's con-

dition and Mary's accident will keep me here a day or two, so my plans are changed for the present, and I shall not be at Easter Hill till next week. Be under no anxiety about Mary, for she has recovered considerably, and will soon again be on her feet. My hand is not so well to-day, and I fear you will hardly be able to read this scrawl.—Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

At no time did my father ever appear so free from care as when communing with nature. With him it was indeed communion. He did not, as many do when living in the presence of fine scenery, show any impatience to leave one scene in order to seek another; no restless desire to be on the top of a mountain, or away into some distant valley; but he would linger in and about the place his heart had fixed to visit. All he desired was there before him; it was almost a lesson to look at his countenance at such moments. There was an expression, as it were, of melancholy, awe, and gratitude, a fervent inward emotion pictured outwardly. His fine blue eye seemed as if, in and beyond nature, it saw some vision that beatified the sight of earth, and sent his spirit to the gates of heaven.

I remember walking a whole day with him, rambling about the neighbourhood of Cladich; scarcely a word was uttered. Now and then he would point out a spot, which sudden sun-gleams made for a moment what he called a "sight of divine beauty;" and then again, perhaps when some more extended and lengthened duration of light overspread the whole landscape, making it

a scene of matchless loveliness, gently touching my arm, he signified, by a motion of his hand, that I too must take in and admire what he did not express by words; silence at such moments was the key to more intense enjoyment. We sat down to rest on an eminence at the head of Loch Awe, when the mid-day sun glittered over every island and promontory, streaking the green fields with lines of gold. Not a sound escaped his lips; but when, after a while, the softening shades of afternoon lent a less intense colour to the scene, he spoke a few words, saying: "Long, long ago, I saw such a sight of beauty here, that if I were to tell it no one would believe it; indeed, I am not sure whether I can describe what I saw; it was truly divine! I have written something very poor and feeble in attempt to describe that incomparable sight, which I cannot now read; but to my dying day I shall not forget the vision."

Did this vision suggest "Lays of Fairyland?"—taking too, in after years, another form than verse. It appeared in one of the most beautiful morsels of prose composition he ever wrote, which so impressed Lord Jeffrey's mind, he never was tired of reading it.

It is a description of a fairy's funeral, and rather than refer the reader to the volume and page where it is to be found, I give the extract, as in fitting association with Loch Awe and the unforgotten vision or poet's dream near the brow of Ben Cruachan:—

"There it was, on a little river island, that once, whether sleeping or waking we know not, we saw

celebrated a fairy's funeral. First, we heard small pipes playing, as if no bigger than hollow rushes that whisper to the night winds; and more piteous than aught that trills from earthly instrument was the scarce audible dirge! It seemed to float over the stream, every foam-bell emitting a plaintive note, till the fairy anthem came floating over our couch, and then alighting without footsteps among the heather. The pattering of little feet was then heard, as if living creatures were arranging themselves in order, and then there was nothing but a more ordered hymn. The harmony was like the melting of musical dewdrops, and sang, without words, of sorrow and death. We opened our eyes, or rather sight came to them when closed, and dream was vision. Hundreds of creatures, no taller than the crest of the lapwing, and all hanging down their veiled heads, stood in a circle on a green plat among the rocks; and in the midst was a bier, framed as it seemed of flowers unknown to the Highland hills; and on the bier a fairy lying with uncovered face, pale as a lily, and motionless as the snow. The dirge grew fainter and fainter, and then died quite away; when two of the creatures came from the circle, and took their station, one at the head, the other at the foot of the bier. They sang alternate measures, not louder than the twittering of the awakened woodlark before it goes up the dewy air, but dolorous and full of the desolation of death. The flower-bier stirred; for the spot on which it lay sank slowly down, and in a few moments the greensward was smooth as ever, the very dews glittering above the buried fairy. A cloud passed over the

moon; and, with a choral lament, the funeral troop sailed duskily away, heard afar off, so still was the midnight solitude of the glen. Then the disenthralled Orchy began to rejoice as before, through all her streams and falls; and at the sudden leaping of the waters and outbursting of the moon, we awoke."

I know not what the custom of authors is with regard to their own works, but this is true, that Professor Wilson never read what he wrote after it was published. He never spoke of himself but with the greatest humility. If egotism he possessed, it belonged entirely to the playful spirit of his writings, as seen in the lighter touches of the "Noctes." It was this humility that gave so great a charm to his graver conversation; and in listening to him, you felt perfectly convinced that truth was the guiding principle of all he said. There was no desire to produce an impression by startling theories, or by careless off-hand *bits* of brilliancy—the glow without heat. Simple, earnest, eloquent, and vigorous, his opinion carried the weight with it which belongs to all in whom implicit confidence rests. I never knew any one the *truth* of whose nature, at a glance, was so evident; not a shadow of dissemblance ever crossed that manly heart. His sympathies are best understood in examples of the love which gentle and simple bore to him.

Fortunately, one of the few letters I ever received from him has been preserved. It brings the reader to 1842, when it will show him in one of his happiest moods. He has shaken the dust of the pavement from

his feet, and pitched his tent for the time being on the pastoral slopes of a retired valley, the beautiful boundary of the river Esk, renowned in story for the adventures of "Young Lochinvar." There, in the spring of the year, he rambled, full of interest and occupation, not angling, or loitering through day-dreams by holm or shaw, but looking on with approving eye, suggesting and aiding, as circumstances required, in the appointment of a new house for his son John, who had just entered upon the pleasant, though anxious, toil of a farmer's life.

As the summer advanced I was to join him there. Meanwhile he writes a description of the *locale*, so beautifully minute in character that it may stand as a daguerreotype of the scene. I offer the letter as one of the best specimens of his domestic correspondence:—

"BILLHOLM, LANGHOLM,
Friday Forenoon, May 27, 1842.

"MY DEAR MARY,—We left Linhope on Wednesday, dined at the farmer's ordinary in Langholm, and came to Billholm in the evening. Yesterday we were all occupied all day taking stock on the hills—60 score; 12 gentlemen dined, 34 shepherds and herdsmen, 10 horses, and 25 dogs. The scene surpassed description, but it is over. This morning the party (with Billholm and Menzion at their head) went off for a similar purpose to Craighope, distant some ten miles; and Billholm, I believe, will return with Mr. Scott (the outgoing tenant) in the evening. Meanwhile I am left alone, and shall send this and some other letters to Lang-

holm by a lad, as *there is no post.* That is inconvenient —very.

"In a day or two we shall be more quiet, but you can have no idea of the bustle and importance of all at this juncture, nor has John an hour to spare for any purpose out of his own individual concerns.

"This place is, beyond doubt, in all respects sweet and serene, being the uppermost farm in the valley of the Esk before it becomes bare. It is not so rich or wooded as a few miles farther down, but is not treeless; the holms or haughs are cultivated and cheerful; the Esk about the size of the Tweed at the Crook, and the hills not so high as the highest about Innerleithen, but elegantly shaped, and in the best style of pastoral.

"The house 'shines well where it stands' on a bank sloping down to the river, which is not above twenty yards from the door, so Goliah[1] has nothing to do but walk in and float down to Langholm. But after Port Bannatyne he is safe against water. It fronts the river; many pleasant holms in the middle distance, and the aforesaid hills about a mile off, surrounding the horizon. Sufficient trees up and down the banks; but the view in front open, not exposed. The house was originally of this common kind: door in the middle, window on each side, three windows above, and windowless roof. A stone portico, since erected, takes away the formality, and breaks the blast. Freestone, neat with a window, good place for a clock, or even a 'beetle.' Entering through a glass door into the passage, to the left is the drawing-room, about sixteen feet square, I think, though

[1] One of his grandchildren.

I have not measured it yet; one window looking to the front, another up the river into a close scene pretty with trees; a most pleasant parlour.

"To the right is *the* parlour, 15 feet by 12, small no doubt, but lodgeable and comfortable. Up stairs (which face you on your entrance) are four bedrooms, all comfortable; the two to the front excellent and fit for anybody; one of them with a small dressing-room with a window. I forgot to say, that behind the drawing-room is a pretty little room for a boudoir, study, or bedroom. All these rooms are papered, not, perhaps, as we would have papered them, but all neat and tidy, and not to be needlessly found fault with. So done only two years ago; so is the passage and staircase. An addition had been made to the house at the end to the right hand; and on the ground floor is the dining-room, into which you enter through the aforesaid parlour. It is, I believe, 18 feet by 16. One window looks to the front, and one into a grove of trees. It is oil-painted, of the colour of dark brick-dust, with a gilt moulding; rather ugly at first sight, but I am trying to like it, and, for the present, it will do. Doors, etc., of all the rooms, good imitation of oak.

"Above the dining-room, and behind it overhead, are two largish rooms, very low in the roof, communicating with one of the best bedrooms aforesaid, and used formerly as nurseries.

"So there are, in fact, seven bedrooms.

"There is a good kitchen (fatally to me, not to John) near the dining-room, and back kitchen, also servants' hall, as it is called, or rather *butler's* pantry—a very

comfortable and useful place — and fitted up with presses, which John bought. There is a woman-servant's room, with two beds; ditto, ditto, man-servant's. A storeroom—good size—and a large dark closet, fit to hold the six tin canisters, though they were sixty, and other things besides. Behind are a few out-houses in rather a shaky condition. The farm-offices are about 100 or 150 yards from the house. The garden is an oblong, containing, I should think, about 1½ acres. One end joins the house; one side is walled, and the farther end; the other side, hedged prettily, and with many lilacs, runs along the banks of the river, and 'tis a very pretty garden indeed. Fruit-trees rather too old, and gooseberry-bushes too; but the latter show a pretty good crop, and I counted 120 bushes. There are also currants and *rasps*, and a promising strawberry bed. Everything in it will be late this season, as it was dressed since John came here, only three weeks ago, but everything is growing. The furniture has not yet made its appearance, but I believe is at Langholm, and I shall hear about it by return of my messenger.

"I will write again first opportunity, and expect to be at home by the middle of the week. Observe the directions in my last letter. Love to Blair and Umbs, Gordon and Goliah, Lexy and Adele, Taglioni, Mary Anne, and the rest.—Your affectionate father,

"JOHN WILSON."

Almost the whole of this summer was spent at Billholm. The winter, coming again with its usual routine

of work, calls him to town somewhere about October. In December his fine "Roman hand" strikes fire once more through the languid ribs of "Maga," and he greets with good heart and will the *Lays of Ancient Rome*. No *arrière pensée* of political differences obtrudes its ill-concealed remembrance through his words. What is it to him whether it be Whig or Tory who writes, when genius, with star-like light, "flames in the forehead of the morning sky." "What! poetry from Macaulay? Ay, and why not? The House hushes itself to hear him, even when 'Stanley is the cry.' If he be not the first of critics (spare our blushes), who is? Name the young poet who could have written *The Armada*, and kindled, as if by electricity, beacons on all the brows of England till night grew day! The young poets, we said, all want fire. Macaulay is not one of the set, for he is full of fire."

And so does he proceed, with honest words of praise, to the end, giving what is due to all. More of his treatment of this noble enemy in another place.

As I have already remarked, there was nothing written for *Blackwood* during the years 1842-44. What was he about? What right has such a question to be put? Is literature worked as if on a tread-mill, under the hand of a task-master; or is the public voice never to cease from the weary cry of "give, give?"

The contents of the following letter to Dr. Moir will show that he was not absolutely idle:—

"*4th Oct.* 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have lost several days in looking over till I am sick, all *Blackwood*, for a description of

Christopher's house in Moray Place. It is somewhere pictured as the House of Indolence, and with some elaboration, as I once heard Horatio Macculloch, the painter, talk of it with rapture. I wish you would cast over in your mind where the description may be, as I would fain put it into a chapter in vol. iii. of 'Recreations' now printing. Sometimes a reader remembers what a writer forgets. It is not in a 'Noctes.' I read it with my own eyes not long ago; but I am ashamed of myself to think how many hours (days) I have wasted in wearily trying to recover it. Perhaps it may recur to you without much effort of recollection.—Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON."

CHAPTER XVI.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1844–48.

WE now come to February 1844, where an old correspondent re-appears, whose letters, if not written in the sunny spirit of *bonhommie*, have a peculiar excellence of their own. Never did graver's tool give more unmistakable sharpness to his lines, than the pen of John Gibson Lockhart gave to his words. The three following letters are as characteristic of his satirical power as any of those off-hand caricatures that shred his best friends to pieces, leaving the most poetical of them as bereft of that beautifying property, as if they had been born utterly without it. I have seen various portraits of my father from that pencil, each bearing the grotesque image of the artist's fancy, yet all undeniably like. So was it his humour nearly to the end, to look upon men and things with the chilling eye of the satirist.

"*25th March* 1844.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I have spelt out your letter with labour,[1] but great ultimate contentment.

"Alexander Blackwood had given me, by yesterday's post, my first information touching that enormous ab-

[1] This difficulty arose from the circumstance of his correspondent suffering, as has been told, from the weakness in his hand.

surdity of —— *in re* Kemp deceased, and I answered him, expressing my deep thankfulness for the result of your interference; but I had not quite understood with how much difficulty you contended, and how nearly you were alone in the fight against eternal desecration. If Kemp had been put there, —— must in due time have polluted the same site *à fœculentiore*. Of the *other* suggestion nipt in the bud, never shall I breathe a whisper to any human being. For some time I have fancied Scotland must be all mad; I never see a Scotch paper without being strengthened in that conviction, but this is the *ne plus ultra!*

"I have not read any novel lately, far less written one. I do not even guess to what new book you allude in your last page. You address me by the name of some *hero*, I suppose, but that is undecipherable by my optics. No bamming here. Do name the book. Is this your sly way of announcing to me some new escapade of the long-haired and longish-headed?

"By the bye, Swinton has depicted both hair and head with very admirable skill. I had no notion that there was such stuff in the lad. He will, I am confident, soon be on a par here with Frank Grant, who is clearing £5000 or £6000 per annum. I like the C. N. a thousandfold better than Lauder's, and hope to have an engraving of it, same size, very speedily.

"I showed the 'Poemata'[1] some weeks ago to John Blackwood, and bade him send you a copy. Perhaps to me you owe your knowledge, therefore, of the novel

[1] *Poemata Lyrica. Versa Latina Rimante Scripta.* By H. D. Ryder. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.

epithet. Horace, however, has 'teterrima belli causa,' and I rather suspect *teterrima* carries a delicate *double entendre* in that classical *loc. vald. cit.*

"You have not read the title-page correctly. First, the book is published by Simpkin, Marshall, *et Co.* 2d. The author is not Moore, *Dean* (to whom it is dedicated, as a compliment to his 'zeal for the Apostolical succession'), *but* H. Ryder, Canon of Lichfield, son of the late Bishop of Lichfield, and nephew of Lord Harrowby. I fancy the man is simply mad; if not, Lonsdale must handsel his jurisdiction by overwhelming a scandal not inferior to the other Fitz-Eveque H. Marsh's *in re* Miord. That case, by the bye, goes to confirm another of my old doctrines, viz., that the Trial by Jury is the grossest of all British humbugs. I forget if it is Swift or Scorpio who sang—

> 'Powers Episcopal we know,
> Must from some apostle flow;
> But I'll never be so rude as
> Ask how many draw from Judas.'

"Here is another fine spring day. Why don't you come up with Lord Peter for a week or two; or without him? The Government is in a tarnation fix. I suspect Ashley has got very wild, poor fellow—a better lives not; and that we shall have by and by Jack Cade in right earnest. Gleig is chaplain-general of the forces; keeping Chelsea and his living in Kent too. * * * * *
Ever yours affectionately, J. G. L.

"Alone and dreary; both my young away from me; I shall soon be left entirely alone in this weary world.

"You read in the papers about Louis Philippe giving Brougham a piece of Gobelins Tapestry, but they did not mention the subject. It is a very fine *picture* indeed,—of a worrying-match between two dogs!

"Now I went a few nights ago to a large dinner at Brougham's house, and on entering the inner room, there was he with a cane, holding aside the curtains, and explaining the beauties of this masterpiece to—*Plain John!!*

"Literal truth; but absurder than any fiction. The company seemed in agonies of diversion at the unconsciousness of the pair of barons.

"*That week* both *H. B.*[1] and *Punch* had been caricaturing them as the Terriers of the *Times* disgracing a drawing-room!

"All true, as I shall answer, etc."

There are one or two allusions in this letter which may require a word of explanation.

The first paragraph refers to a proposition made by some parties in Edinburgh, that the remains of Mr. Kemp, the architect of the Scott monument, should have interment beneath it, he having come to an untimely end not long after the completion of his design. Professor Wilson had some trouble in preventing this

[1] Mr. John Doyle, the father of Richard Doyle, author of *Brown, Jones, and Robinson*, "is generally believed to be the author of the celebrated H.B. political sketches, which were a few years ago so remarkably popular, and which, while exhibiting with abundant keenness the prominent features and peculiarities of the persons caricatured, were always gentlemanly in feeling, and free from any appearance of malice."—Knight's *English Cyclopædia*.

absurd project being carried out. In the second, there are some playful remarks about a novel; *à propos* of which, I may say, that novel-reading was a mental dissipation my father seldom indulged in, regarding that sort of literature, in general, as enervating to the mind, and destructive to the formation of good taste. Now and then he was prevailed on to open one, when recommended as very good. *Whitefriars* had just been published; he was delighted with it, and sat down, on the impulse of the moment, to congratulate the author (who could be no other than John G. Lockhart) on his success; and in this belief, he addresses him by the title of his hero.[1]

This letter is almost immediately followed by another:—

"*March* 28, 1844.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—It is not easy to judge of the merit of an architectural design until one (I mean an ignoramus) has seen it in actual stone. I thought the drawing of Scott's monument very good, and I suppose, from what is now executed, you can form a fair opinion. All my remaining anxiety is that the statue should be in *bronze*. Marble will last very few years before you see the work of decay on the surface. Is it too late to make a vigorous effort for this, in my mind, primary object? I have no fear about *money*. I met . . . yesterday at dinner at . . . , and gave her your love. She is a fine creature. I see nothing like her, and were I either young or rich, I should be in danger. She told me Brewster, Chalmers, and all the Frow Kirk are going

[1] *Whitefriars* has been ascribed to Miss E. Robinson.

to start a new Review. How many Reviews are we to have? Is not it odd that the old ones keep afloat at all? but I doubt if they have lost almost anything as yet. The *Q. R. prints* nearly 10,000, I know, if not quite. Nor have I heard that Ebony is declining, in spite of these Hoods and Ainsworths, etc. etc.

"... showed me a lot of Edinburgh daguerreotypes —the Candlishes, etc.; that of Sir D. Brewster is by far the best specimen of the art I had ever seen. It is so good, that I should take it very kind if you would sit to the man whom Brewster patronizes *for me*.[1] I should like also to have Sheriff Cay. This art is about to revolutionize book-illustration entirely.

"There is very great uneasiness here about this ten hours' affair. I really expect to see the Government displaced sooner or later by this coalition of Johnny Russell with Ashley, Oastler, and the *Times*. Your old friend, Sir James Graham, is terribly unpopular with both sides of the House. Yet I think his demeanour in private society infinitely more agreeable than Peel's, who, somehow, is not run upon in the same style by any party. Inglis takes kindly to the name of Jack Cade. We shall have him H.B.'d of course. Ashley speaks well, he has a fine presence, good voice, and his zeal gives him real eloquence now and then; but he has slender talents, and his head has been quite turned by the popularity he has acquired. I seriously fear he will go mad. He lives and moves in an atmosphere of fanaticism, talks quite gravely

[1] My father did so, and the frontispiece to the present *Memoir* is engraved from Mr. Hill's calotype, by the artist's kind permission.

about the Jews recovering Jerusalem, the Millennium at hand, etc. etc.

"Brougham goes to Paris this week to (*inter alia*) take counsel with Guizot and Dupin about a great humbug (I believe), his new Society for the Amendment of the Law; and, learning that Lyndhurst, Denman, etc., approved, I agreed to be a member on Brougham's request, and went to a meeting yesterday, where he was in the chair. What a restless, perturbed spirit! * * * * *

"Nothing could surprise me now-a-days. The Government have allowed B. to be their saviour so often in the H. of Lords, that they may by and by find it impossible to refuse him even the Seals. I am, you see, idle, and in gossiping vein this morning, having just got rid of a d—d thick Quarterly, I fear, a dull one.—Ever affectionately yours, J. G. LOCKHART."

In the next letter, which is the last of this correspondence that has been preserved, it will be seen how pain and inward yearning for things gone from before his eyes had softened a stern nature, bringing it through trials which left him a sadder and a wiser man:—

"FAIRLAWN, TUNBRIDGE,
Easter Wednesday, 1844.

"MY DEAR WILSON,—I had your kind letter here yesterday, and the *resolutions* as to the Scott and Kemp affairs, which seem to me, drawn up in the best possible taste, not a word to give offence, and much very delicately calculated to conciliate. I came to this place a week ago, utterly done up in body and

mind; but perfect repose and idleness, with cold lamb and home-brewed beer, and no wine nor excitement of any sort, have already done wonders, and in fact convinced me that I might have health again, if I could manage to cut London, and Quarterly Reviews. As for any very lively interest in this life, that is out of the question with me as with you, and from the same fatal date, though I struggled against it for a while, instead of at once estimating the case completely as I think you did. Let us both be thankful that we have children not unworthy of their mothers. I reproach myself when the sun is shining on their young and happy faces, as well as on the violets and hyacinths and bursting leaves, that I should be unable to awaken more than a dim ghost-like semi-sympathy with them, or in any thing present or to come, but so it is. No good, however, can come of these croakings. Like you I have no plans now—never. Walter must fag hard all this summer in Essex with a Puseyite tutor, if he is to go to Balliol in October with any advantage, and therefore I think it most likely I shall not stir far from London. * * * *

"* * * * I used to have a real friendship for the water of Clyde and some half-dozen of its tributary Calders and Lethans, familiar from infancy; and most of all, for certain burns with deep rocky beds and cold invisible cascades. As it is, I could be well contented to abide for the rest of this life in such a spot as this same Fairlawn—well named. It is a large ancient house built round a monastic court, with a good park, most noble beeches, and limes and oaks,

looking over the rich vale of the Medway, with a tract of rough heath, and holt, and sand-hill, lying behind it, six or seven miles in length, and about two in breadth. This was the original seat of the Vanes; and old Sir Harry lies buried here with many of his ancestors. It is now possessed by Miss Yates, cousin-german to Sir R. Peel, an excellent, sensible, most kind old lady; stone blind from five years of age, and otherwise afflicted, but always cheerful; too high a Tory to admire the premier, and *inter alia*, of old Sir Robert's opinion as to the Children question. I am going to-day for a few days to another house in this neighbourhood, and shall be in London again by this day week.

"Sir W. Allan writes he has a picture of Sir W. and Anne Scott for the Exhibition. I hope rather than expect to be pleased therewith.

"So Abinger *exit*. He wedded a spry widow who had been anxious for his third son on last August; and on landing at Calais for the honey trip, put herself down 'age 55;' but the Fates were not to be gammoned, nor Lady Venus neither, and the coffin-plate will tell truly: Ann. Ætat. 76. I suppose Pollock will take the place, yet it is not impossible that *H. B.* may fancy it, and if he does, it might not be easy for Peel to give him a rebuff.—Ever affectionately yours,

"J. G. L."

Lockhart's very sorrows are a contrast to those of his friend. There is something of a listless bitterness in the words "I should be unable to awaken more than a dim ghost-like semi-sympathy with them, or in anything

present or to come." He is stricken, as it were, and will not look up. But my father, with that healthful heart of his, that joyous nature that smiles even in the midst of tears, had scarcely yet laid aside the strong enthusiasm which belonged so remarkably to his youth. His energies are, as may be seen from the following letter to his son John, still directed to the "Kemp affair." The subject is pleasantly mingled with domestic interests concerning Billholm :—

"6, GLOUCESTER PLACE,
Saturday 6th, 1844.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—On looking over the portfolio of prints, I thought Harvey's Covenanters, Baptism, and Allan's Burns worth framing, and have got them framed in same style with Allan's Scott in the dining-room. These three make a trio, with Harvey in the middle, which will hang, I think, well on the drawing-room wall opposite the front window.

"The Polish Exiles will hang, I think, well to the right of the door, as you enter the drawing-room, if in the middle, so as at any time to allow of two appropriate pendants. The demure Damsel may range with Victoria. But follow your own taste, which is as good, or better than mine.

"The five will make the room look gay, and they leave this by the waggon on the 8th instant, directed to be left at Langholm till called for.

"I close my session on Friday the 12th, or perhaps a day or two sooner. The weather here is fine, and I trust you will have a good lambing season in spite of the severities since you left us. I see prices are some-

what better, and trust this year may be considerably more favourable than the last two. My own motions are not fixed for the future; but I shall not leave this before the latter end of May for any other quarter. Four hundred persons were assembled to inter Kemp in the Scott Monument. I heard of it at eleven o'clock; saw M'Neill, and after much angry discussion with a deputation, stopped the funeral, and turned it into the West Kirkyard. They had got leave from . . . and some other fools, and had kept the public ignorant of the proceedings. Very general approbation of our interference is not unmixed with savage or sulky exasperation among the ten-pounders who stood up for their order. It would have been a vulgar outrage. Next day's *Witness* was insolent, but since, there has been a calm sough. The general committee have since passed resolutions approving our conduct. We passed them ourselves, and I moved them in a strong speech, to which there was no reply.

"A Professor of Music was to be chosen on Saturday the 3d March. We were all met; but neither party could tell how it might go, as there were two doubtful votes. The Bennettites boldly moved, on false and foolish pretence of giving time to a new candidate named Pearson, to postpone the election till the 1st of June; and this motion was carried *by one*. They hope something may occur before then, to give Bennett a better chance; and they expect to have the vote of the Chemical Professor, who is to be elected in a few weeks, which may turn the scales. . . . We are all well, and Mary will visit you soon. I leave Blair, who is

well, to speak for his own motions. He has been talking of going to Billholm for some days past. With love from all here and in Carlton Street.—I am, your affectionate father, J. WILSON."

Soon after this home-loving spirit has assisted in making the pretty pastoral farm "look gay," we find him in the full energy of his ardent nature, awakening the sympathies of all around him on a subject that moved the whole Scottish nation as with one heart, and ultimately brought a stream of sympathetic souls together to the banks of Doon, till it seemed as if all Scotland had poured its life there to do honour to the memory of Burns.

The Burns Festival was an occasion fitted to call forth the zeal of Wilson's nature, and he worked heart and soul in the cause, with vigour little less than that which impelled him, in "his bright and shining youth," *to walk seventy miles* to be present at a Burns meeting, which he "electrified with a new and peculiar fervour of eloquence, such as had never been heard before."[1] We have three letters relative to this great gathering; one is addressed to his son-in-law, Mr. Gordon, before it took place, with a view to arranging the toasts :—

[1] Of the Professor's walking feats I have not been able to gather many authentic anecdotes. Mr. Aird mentioned the fact quoted here in his speech at the Burns Festival, and my brother writes me on the subject:—"I have often heard him mention the following. He once walked forty miles in eight hours, but when or where he did it I cannot recollect. On another occasion he walked from Liverpool to Elleray, within the four-and-twenty hours. I do not know what the distance is,

"MY DEAR SHERIFF,—The toasts now stand well, and we shall not try to improve the arrangement. What you say about the poor dear Shepherd is, I fear, true, though his fame will endure. Neither will his memory have to come in till after Scott and Campbell; and we all know, that even on a generally popular theme, it is very difficult to secure attention and interest far on in the 'Course of Time.' Perhaps the memory of the Shepherd cannot be given at all, for if some prosing driveller, without name or influence, were to give it, it would not do at all. If so, I shall speak of him during what I say of Burns. Will that do? I desire to have your opinion of this; for if you think it would not do, I shall look about for a proper person to give his memory after Alison has spoken. William Aytoun? What should follow? 'The Peasantry,' etc. That toast I recommended to Mr. Ballantine, and we leave it in his hands, or any one he may select to do it for him. If the Justice-General or Lord Advocate were to give 'Lord Eglinton' in a few sentences, it would do well. But such toast is not necessary; for the names might be merely mentioned, and the thanks carried by acclamation. So with all others. These toasts might be set down and assigned, and given as circumstances may permit.

"I shall write to Ballantine to that effect, subject to any alterations; and there is no need to print the

but think it must be somewhere about eighty miles. You are correct about his walking from Kelso to Edinburgh—forty miles, to attend a public dinner. It was in 1822, when the King was there. Once, when disappointed in getting a place in the mail from Penrith to Kendal, he gave his coat to the driver, set off on foot, reached Kendal some time before the coach, and then trudged on to Elleray."

toasts, etc., tunes, etc., till all is fixed, a few days before the 6th; vice-chairman, stewards, etc., as no man of course would, on such an occasion, speak of himself, the place assigned him, whatever that may be, speaking for itself.

"Finally, we propose 'The Provost and Magistrates of Ayr and other Burghs,' and 'The Ladies,' of course, with shouts of love and delight. And so finis."

The next letter is from Sergeant Talfourd,[1] whom he had invited to join the meeting at Ayr :—

"OXFORD, *July* 14, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your very kind letter respecting the festival on the banks of the Doon has reached me at this city, where I am on the Circuit; and if it were possible for me to meet the wish it so cordially expresses, I should at once recall the answer I felt compelled to give to the invitation of the committee, and look forward with delight to sharing in the enjoyments of the time. When, however, I tell you the sad truth, that on the 6th August we (*i.e.*, the Circuit) shall be at Shrewsbury, and on the 7th shall turn southward to Hereford, so that it will be impossible for me to be in Scotland on the 6th by the utmost exertion, and all the aid of steamboats and railways, without entirely absenting myself from both the Shrewsbury and the Hereford Assizes, and causing serious inconvenience to many, besides the loss to myself. I am sure you will sympathize with the conviction I have reluctantly adopted, that *I cannot* be with you at your most interesting

[1] Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd died in the discharge of his professional duties at the Assizes, 1854.

meeting. Our long circuit, which is this year somewhat later than usual, in consequence of the Irish Writ of Error, will not close before the 22d or 23d August, when I hope to take my family to the country you know so well in the neighbourhood of Windermere, where Mr. Wordsworth has taken a cottage for us for the holidays. If your festival had, happily for me, occurred while I was there at liberty, I should have embraced, with pleasure I cannot express, the opportunity of meeting you under circumstances so original as the celebration of one of the truest poets who ever lived, and of beholding his genius by the light of yours, and then I might perhaps have hoped to induce our great living poet to accompany me. But I am tantalizing myself by fancying impossibilities, and can only hope that Wordsworth may grace your festival, and that all happiness may attend it, and you and yours.—Believe me to remain, my dear Sir, most truly and respectfully yours, T. N. TALFOURD."

The last from the Professor to Aird is characteristic of that gentle courtesy which the chivalry of his nature ever showed to woman. Such traits of kindliness may seem almost too trifling to draw attention to, but they are unfortunately not so common in the routine of intercourse with our fellow-creatures as could be wished:—

"EDINBURGH, *Saturday Evening, August 17th*, 1844.

"MY DEAR MR. AIRD,—I looked about for you in all directions, but could not see you on the field or in the Pavilion. I wished most to have had you on the plat-

form, as the procession passed by before the Adelphi. It was very affecting.

"I told the Committee a week or two before the Festival, to invite Mrs. Thomson (Jessie Lewars), and no doubt they did so. But I could get no information about her being there from anybody, so did not allude to her in what I said, lest she might not be present.

"I spoke to a lady in the Aulds' cottage, thinking she was Mrs. Begg, but she told me she was not; giving me her name, which I did not catch. Perhaps she was Mrs. Thomson? I wish you would inquire, and, if so, tell her that I did not hear the name; for, if it was she, I must have seemed wanting in kindness of manner. I saw it stated in a newspaper that she was seated in the Pavilion with Mrs. Begg. I wished I had known that—if it was so; but nobody on the morning of the Festival seemed to know anything, and Mr. Auld in his cottage naturally enough was so *carried*, that he moved about in all directions with ears inaccessible to human speech.

"A confounded bagpipe and a horrid drum drove a quarter of an hour's words out of my mind, or rather necessitated a close, leaving out a good deal to balance what I did say.

"I intend publishing my address in Blackwood's next number, properly corrected, along with all the others; and, if you can find a place for it in the *Herald*, I wish you would, for I wish the people in the country to see it, if they choose, in right form. Speakers are at the mercy of the *first* reporter, and at the mercy of circumstances.

"I am not without hopes of seeing you at Dumfries this month—or early next. 'Twas a glorious gathering. —Yours affectionately, JOHN WILSON."

My father was always glad to escape from Edinburgh during the summer, but latterly he required other inducement than the "rod" to take him from home; a solitary "cast" was losing its charm, and he now liked to find companions to saunter with him by loch and stream. This summer his old friend, Dr. Blair, had been visiting him, and was easily prevailed on to take a ramble to the Dochart before returning south. The following letter to his daughter Jane (Umbs or "Crumbs"), tells of his own sport and of the *Wizard's* walks :—

"LUIB, *Sunday, June* 1, 1845.

"DEAR CRUMBS,—We arrived at Luib (pronounced Libe) on the Dochart, foot of Benmore, on Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock, *via* Loch Lomond and Glenfalloch. We soon found ourselves ensconced in a snug parlour looking into a pretty garden, and in every way comfortable. Our bedroom is double-bedded—small; but such beds I have not slept in for 100 years. Since our arrival till this hour there has not been above twenty drops of rain, and the river (the Dochart) has not been known so low by the oldest inhabitant, who is the landlord—aged eighty-five—deaf and lame —but hearty and *peart*. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, after breakfast, *I* walked *three* miles up the river, which flows past the inn, and fished down, killing each day with midges about three dozen good

trout, like herrings, of course, and about ten dozen of fry—a few of about a pound; none larger. The natives are astonished at my skill, as in such weather fish were never caught before. The Wizard[1] disappears in the morning, and returns to dinner about six. On Thursday he left Luib about nine, and returned at half-past seven, having been over a range of mountains and back again, certainly 2000 feet high. But on Friday he was much fatigued and kept to the valley, and even yesterday he had not recovered from his fatigue. With respect to myself, I am always knocked up at night, and fresh in the morning. I made right down the middle of the river among huge rocks and stones, avoiding all the pools twenty feet deep, of which there are hundreds, many places utterly dried up, others not a foot deep. In flood or rains it must be a most tremendous river. On Monday I think of going to Loch Narget (Maragan?), about eight miles over the hills, but only if windy and cloudy.

"On the whole, this is the pleasantest inn I ever was at, and the station in all respects delightful. The Wizard takes a *gill of whisky* daily. I have given up all hopes of rain, and intend staying here a few days longer. We shall be at Cladich on Thursday."

"PORT SONACHAN, *June* 9.

"MY DEAR UMBS,—We left Luib on Thursday the 5th instant, and reached Cladich at half-past seven. No Williams, nor room for ourselves, so we proceeded three miles to Port Sonachan, where we have been ever since. Friday was a day of storm, and no fishing.

[1] Dr. Alexander Blair.

Having allowed my boat to drift a few miles to leeward, it took two boatmen three hours to bring me back to port, during which time it rained incessantly, and was bitter cold. I suffered much, and was in fits on Saturday. The fishing was bad, and I only killed nine; but one was a noble fellow, upwards of two pounds. On Monday kept the house all day. To-day fished eight miles down the lake to Castle Ardchonnel, a very fine old ruin on an island, which I had never seen before; landed and dined in the castle with Archy and Sandy, time from three to four o'clock; wound up and returned before the wind, homeward-bound; beheld the Wizard on a point of the loch, and took him in; reached Port Sonachan before seven, and dined sumptuously. Angling had been admirable; sixty-one trout crammed into the basket, which could not have held another. Of these, thirty were from one-half to three-quarters and one pound each; the rest not small; they covered two large tea-trays. It reminded me of the angling thirty and thirty-five years ago. The natives, especially Archy, were astonished.

"I understood the Wizard wrote to Blair yesterday; he enjoys himself much, and walks about from morning to night."

We shall now follow him through a small portion of the year 1845, when he appears to have resumed his work with steady purpose, as may be seen by looking at the Magazine for seven consecutive months. North's Specimens of the "British Critics" make a noble contribution to that periodical. Those papers, along with too many of equal power and greater interest, have found

jealous protection within the *ceinture* of its pages, and seem destined to a fate which ought only to belong to the meagre works of mediocrity. The eighth number of "British Critics" was written at Elleray, whither he had gone for a few weeks, tempted by a beautiful summer, and the natural longing of his heart to roam about a place full of so many images, pleasant and sad, of the past. The following note to Mr. Gordon refers to this article :—

"ELLERAY, *Wednesday.*

"MY DEAR GORDON,—I am confidently looking for best accounts of dear Mary every day.

"Pray, attend! I have sent a long article to Blackwood—'No. VIII. on Critics'—about MacFlecnoe, but chiefly the 'Dunciad.' It will be very long,—far longer than I had anticipated, or he may wish. It cannot be sent here for correction, and I wish much you would *edit it.*

"Blackwood will give it to you when set up—and I hope corrected in some measure by the printer—along with the MS.; and perhaps *on Tuesday* you may be able to go over it all, and prevent abuses beyond patience. I will trust to you. I also give you power to *leave some out,* if absolutely necessary. Don't let it be *less than thirty-two pages*—if the MS. requires more. In short, I wish the article in this number, and all in if possible. If not, I leave omission to your discretion; but read it all over carefully first, that you may not leave out something referring to something remaining in. 'We ship on the 24th.'—Yours ever, in haste for post, J. W."

In the same year (1847), when the Philosophical Institution was established in Edinburgh, he was elected its first President, and delivered the opening address. To this honourable office he was re-elected by the members every year as long as he lived.

We have now come to a longer blank, relieved by no letter, by no work. From the autumn of 1845 till that of 1848 there is nothing but silence. Alas! this was but the beginning of the end. Ten years ago, while yet strong in body, though suffering and sad of heart, the melancholy of his mind gave a similar tone to his words, and he wrote of himself as if his days were being consumed swifter than a weaver's shuttle:—"Day after day we feel more and more sadly that we are of the dust, and that we are obeying its doom. This life is felt to be slowly—too swiftly wheeling away with us down a dim acclivity,—man knoweth not into what abyss. And as the shows of this world keep receding to our backward gaze, on which gathers now the gloom, and now the glimmer, of this world, hardly would they seem to be, did not memories arise that are realities, and some so holy in their sadness that they grow into hopes, and give assurance of the skies."

With thoughts such as these ever springing from the pure region of his soul, did he go on meeting the common day with hope brightened into cheerfulness, until existence was beautified once more by the conviction that duties were still before him,—though one was gone whose approving smile had given impetus to all he did.

The first break to this silence comes in a short letter, written to his old friend Mr. Findlay, inviting him to be present at the marriage of his son John, which took place in July 1848. This relation was one conducive to his happiness,—a fresh tie to keep him hale and strong of heart,—making the summer visits to Billholm all the more agreeable by a welcome from its new occupant, whose gentle companionship often cheered his rambles by the river side, or made pleasant a rest beneath the shade of its trees :—

"*Friday, June* 9, 1848.

"MY DEAR ROBERT,—My son John is to be married on the 22d of this month, at the house of his father-in-law, Mr. G. Bell, 43, Melville Street. We are sorry not to have beds to offer our friends, and a journey to and from Edinburgh may not be convenient to you at this time ; but if you, your good lady, and one of your dear daughters, can assist at the ceremony (twelve o'clock) I need not say how welcome will be your presence, and that we shall hope to see you after it at Glo'ster Place.—Ever affectionately yours.

"J. WILSON."

It may be seen from a letter to his son Blair, that he had lost no time in paying a visit to the newly-married pair ; for he writes from their home on the 28th September 1848, having taken a peep of the pastoral hills on his way from Elleray, where he had been in the earlier part of the season. His letter speaks of domestic matters only ; but it is easy to see a change in his spirit, and that he clings more and more to the circle

of young lives around him. Loneliness, as time crept on, was a feeling that easily affected him, so much so, that sometimes on his return from the College, if he found no one in the house, he would turn from the door, and retrace his steps through the streets, until he met with his daughter, or some of his little grandchildren, then all was right, and a walk with them restored him to his wonted spirits. How sadly comes the confession from his lips of the dreariness which fell upon him at Elleray, a place at one time enjoyable as paradise, but where now he could not rest, as these touching words tell: "I have resolved not to return to Elleray, as I should not be able to be there if you had left it. I slept at Bowness the fifth night after my return to Elleray from Hollow Oak; the silence and loneliness of myself at night not being to be borne, though during the day I was tranquil enough." He makes allusion to his hand, "it is very poorly," and so indeed it was, for he had been unable to use it, saving with difficulty, for nearly three years. This weakness annoyed him very much, not more than was natural, if it appeared to him to be the commencement of a greater evil—that fatal breaking up, which saps the strength, and brings age before its time.

His accustomed work goes on, but by fits and starts, according to his bodily vigour. This autumn only one paper was written for *Blackwood*, upon Byron's "Address to the Ocean," one of those beautiful critiques which go so deeply into the true principles of poetry. Its severity may startle at first, but can hardly fail to be acknowledged as just.

His whole heart and soul were in poetry, and he threw out from the intensity of that feeling a hundred little side-lights, that sparkled and danced on and about the commonest things in nature, till, like a long-continued sunbeam, they lengthened and deepened into a broad light, the happiest, the most joyous in the world, radiant with fun, careering, playing the strangest pranks, showing at last, in shape unmistakable, that enviable property which cannot by any skill in the world be planted in a nature that has it not from its cradle. I do not agree with those who hold that humour is the best part of human nature, and that the whole meaning of a man's character may be traced to his humour. But it is an element coming and going, with other qualities, with all that composes the inner spirit; often, it is true, in abeyance, but never crushed; always asserting its rights, not unfrequently with an incongruity which, in its unexpected intrusion, does not rob it of charm, but rather adds to its power.

Wilson's humour has been described as being sometimes too broad; perhaps, in the "Noctes," he occasionally makes use of an *impasto* laid on a little too roughly. But who ever enjoyed his conversation at home or abroad, among the woods and wilds of nature, or on the busy streets of Edinburgh, that was not as often overpowered by his humour as by his wit, by his wisdom as by his eloquence? His manner in mixing the talk with the walk was peculiar. He took several steps alongside of you, conducting you on to the essential point, then, when he had reached that, he stopped, "right-about faced," stood in front

of you, looking full at you, and delivered the conclusion, then released you from the stop you were forced to make, walked on a few paces, and turned in the same manner again.

Latterly, a walk to the College was rather too much for him, and he generally took a cab from George Street. This in time became his habit, and gave rise occasionally to the most riotous behaviour among the cab-drivers, who used to be on the look-out for his approach, all desirous of driving him. The moment that well-known figure was seen, an uproar began. His appearance and dress were too peculiar not be recognised a good way off, for no one wore a hat with so broad a brim, covered with such a deep crape, his long hair flowing carelessly about his neck, and his black coat buttoned across his chest, now somewhat portly. Still, despite increasing infirmity, his step was free, and he looked leonine in strength and bearing. So did he when he sat for his photograph to Mr. D. O. Hill, an engraving from which is prefixed to this work. In this product of that wonderful art, then in its infancy, comes out the character of the man; the block, as it were, from nature, not softened down or refined away by that delicacy which so often makes portrait-painting insensate, but great in its original strength; with a something, perhaps more of the man, and a little less of the poet in his look, than painting would have given, yet unmistakable to the very character of the hands, broad and beautiful in form. The hair, not so fine, is rather lost in the hazy shadows of the photograph, but all else is good and true. Why, some one

may ask, are those "*weepers*"[1] on his sleeves?[2] This was a mark of respect he paid to the memory of his wife, and which he continued to wear as long as he lived, renewing these simple outward memorials with tender regularity. The solicitude he showed about his weepers was very touching. Many a time I have sewed them on while he stood by till the work was finished, never satisfied unless he saw it done himself.

A street scene was described to me by a lady who saw it take place :—

One summer afternoon, as she was about to sit down to dinner, her servant requested her to look out of the window, to see a man cruelly beating his horse. The sight not being a very gratifying one, she declined, and proceeded to take her seat at table. It was quite evident that the servant had discovered something more than the ill-usage of the horse to divert his attention, for he kept his eyes fixed on the window; again suggesting to his mistress that she ought to look out. Her interest was at length excited, and she rose to see what was going on. In front of her house (Moray Place) stood a cart of coals, which the poor victim of the carter was unable to drag along. He had been beating the beast most unmercifully, when at that moment Professor Wilson, walking past, had seen the outrage and immediately interfered. The lady said, that from the expression of his face, and

[1] "Weepers" are "stripes of muslin or cambric stitched on the extremities of the sleeves of a black coat or gown, as a badge of mourning."—*Jamieson.*

[2] They do not appear in the engraving, as the page is too small to contain the whole photograph.

vehemence of his manner, the man was evidently "getting it," though she was unable to hear what was said. The carter, exasperated at this interference, took up his whip in a threatening way, as if with intent to strike the Professor. In an instant that well-nerved hand twisted it from the coarse fist of the man, as if it had been a straw, and walking quietly up to the cart he unfastened its *trams*, and hurled the whole weight of coals into the street. The rapidity with which this was done left the driver of the cart speechless. Meanwhile, poor Rosinante, freed from his burden, crept slowly away, and the Professor, still clutching the whip in one hand, and leading the horse in the other, proceeded through Moray Place to deposit the wretched animal in better keeping than that of its driver. This little episode is delightfully characteristic of his impulsive nature, and the benevolence of his heart. No weak appeal, through the gossiping columns of newspapers, to humane societies for the suppression of cruelty to animals; but action on the spot, with instantaneous aid to the oppressed. Such summary measures, however, are not always taken. Moral courage is required to face bystanders; and not many would care to be seen with a carter's huge whip, leading a miserable, raw-boned, old horse through the fashionable streets of Edinburgh. But he despised nothing that was just, even to the meanest of created things; and had a supreme contempt for the observance of conventional formalities, when they interfered with good and honest feelings of the heart.

It may seem somewhat strange, as I advance towards

the later years of my father's life, that I can relate nothing of foreign travel; or even of recurring visits to London. Only twice after his marriage did he go to the metropolis, and then, not for any lengthened period, nor with the purpose of keeping himself in the world, or gathering gossip from that great whirlpool of tongues. He never, as far as I can remember, at any time thought of or cared to associate his name with circumstances likely to bring him into contact with that huge centre of the world—the first entrance to which he so beautifully describes in his "Recreations," written in 1828; too long to give here, and yet almost too fine to be omitted. But those who do not know it, will do well to learn how a nature such as his was affected, by what scarcely now awakens more than a certain curiosity, that ere long takes the shape of *blasé* indifference. I doubt very much if any spirit, even beyond the common mould, ever had such emotions awakened within it as those Wilson felt when, "all alone and on foot," he reached that mighty city, where every sight he saw called up some thought of wonder from the treasures of his ardent mind.

Here is a portion of his powerful description; to convey the idea how, without fear yet trembling, he left the world of his dreams, the "emerald caves," the "pearl-leaved forests," and "asphodel meadows," and opened his eyes upon that which was no longer a shadow. "Now were we in the eddies—the vortices —the whirlpools of the great roaring sea of life! and away we were carried, not afraid, yet somewhat trembling in the awe of our new delight, into the heart of

the habitations of all the world's most imperial, most servile, most tyrannous, and most slavish passions! All that was most elevating and most degrading, most startling and most subduing too; most trying by temptation of pleasure, and by repulsion of pain; into the heart of all joy and all grief; all calm and all storm; all dangerous trouble and more dangerous rest; all rapture and all agony—crime, guilt, misery, madness, despair." This fragment is part of one of those prose poems which he has so often composed, and which many of his imaginative essays may be called. What visions foreign shores would have brought to his mind, can from such morsels as this, be imagined. But the plans of his youth, sketched out no doubt during a period of mental disquietude, and broken up for ever, were not likely to be again suggested to one who had found in domestic life so much happiness. Thus, all thoughts of travel were dissipated from his mind when excitement ceased to be necessary for the preservation of his peace. So time passed away, and no new place rose up to tempt him from home. I believe, however, if his health had continued unbroken, or even been partially restored, he would have crossed the Atlantic.

There is no literary man of our land more highly prized or better appreciated in America than Professor Wilson. In that country his name is respected, and his writings are well known. It is doubtful if in England he has so large a circle of admirers. I have often heard him speak of Americans in terms of admiration. He knew many, and received all who came

to see him with much interest and kindness; loving to talk with them on the literary interests of their country; giving his opinion freely on the merits and demerits of its writers, for they were well known to him—Of one of them he always spoke with profound respect, as a man whose spiritual life and great accomplishments, pure philosophical inquiries and critical taste, had given him a lofty position among his countrymen—Dr. Channing, the piety of whose character made his life upon earth one of singular beauty. Of his peculiar religious tenets I never heard my father speak. Nobility of nature, and aspirations directed to high aims in exercising influence for good over his fellow-creatures, were virtues of a kind, taken in combination with intellectual power, sufficient to win favour from him.

The autobiographical nature of my father's writings permits me, to a certain extent, to make use of such passages as I know are not only the expression of his sentiments, but likewise a reflex of his conduct in life. Then he had a simple habit of seeking pleasure in communion with his own people above all others, finding their society sufficient for the interest and enjoyment of life. Thus it is that I have no record to give of his mixing in circles composed of those above him in station; no *bons mots* from noble wits; no flashes of repartee from dames of high degree; at home and abroad he walked a simple, unaffected, *unfashionable* man. With gracious respect to rank, he held aloof from the society of the great; admiring from the distance at which he stood, the great and illustrious names

that adorned his land; doing homage in the silence of his heart to all that makes aristocracy admirable and worthy of good report, yet preferring to remain true to his own order.

It was this loyalty that gave him power over the hearts of men, and, I believe, this influence it was which, beyond the respect that knowledge wins, enabled him to render such valuable assistance to art in Scotland. Though he was not (beyond opportunities found in youth) cultivated as many are in the deeper parts of art, such as can only be fathomed by long study and unwearied research, he nevertheless possessed an intuitive feeling for it; he loved it, and brought an intimate knowledge of nature in all her humours, to bear upon what was set before him. The poet's eye unravelled the painter's meaning, and if minute detail escaped the expression of his admiration, as not being significant of the moving spirit of the painter's soul, it was because this careful transcription merged its beauty into greater and more touching effect; even as in contemplating nature, our first feeling is not to sit down to trace the delicate pencillings of flowers, or count the leaves of the dark-belted woods, or yet pick out the violet from its mossy bed. In the perfect landscape we know how much lies "hidden from the eye," and so with the perfect tableau. Our first impression is taken from the general effect, and if one of delight, fails to be recognised until our transport has subsided; then from delight to wonder are the senses changed, and the handiwork of nature in art is acknowledged by one acclamation of praise. It was

this love of nature, this devotion to the beautiful, the *truth* as I have before observed, that made my father welcome to that body of men who form so interesting a portion of the community—our painters. Their social gatherings, their public meetings, even the "annual Exhibition," was confessed to be benefited by his presence. That hearty sympathy, the genial smile, and the ready joke, are all remembered as something not soon to be seen again. The artist's studio was a resort well known to him, and many an hour did he spend within its pleasant enclosures.

On one occasion when sitting to Mr. Thomas Duncan for his portrait,[1] entering his studio, he said, "I am sorry, my dear sir, that my sitting must to-day be a short one; I have an engagement at two o'clock, I have not a moment after that hour to spare." Mr. Duncan, of course, expressed his regret; and at once arranged his easel, placed his subject in the desired position, and began his work. Never had an hour passed away so rapidly. The Professor was in excellent spirits, and the painter, delighted with his sitter, was loath to say that two o'clock had struck. "Has it?" said the Professor, "I must be off;" and forthwith began to re-arrange his toilette, looking at himself in the large pier-glass, stepping backwards and forwards, making remarks upon his appearance, tying his neckcloth, brushing back his hair, then turning to Mr. Duncan with some jocular observation on the subject of dress. Sitting down for

[1] Christopher in his Sporting Jacket. Mr. Thomas Duncan, an accomplished artist, died in 1844. His portrait, painted by himself, hangs in the National Gallery, Edinburgh.

a moment led on to something about art; then perhaps a story. Rising up, his waistcoat, still in his hand, was at last put on; a walk for a moment or two about the room; another story, ending in laughter; beginning again some discourse upon graver matters, till he fell into a train of thought that by degrees warmed him into one of those indescribable rushes of eloquence, that poured out the whole force of his mind; turning the studio into a lecture-room, and the artist to one of the most delighted of his students.

"Bless me, my dear sir," he said, rising suddenly; "give me my coat, I fear it is long past two o'clock, I had almost forgotten my engagement."

Mr. Duncan, smiling, handed him his coat, saying, "I fear, sir, your engagement must be at an end for to-day; it is now five o'clock."

Many a story, I believe, of this sort could be told of him.

There is nothing in the world so difficult to call up and retain as a passing gleam of fun or humour. We require the accessories of the moment, the peculiar little touch, the almost invisible light, that, gleaming athwart the mind, kindled it into that exuberance out of which comes the story, the jest, the speaking evidence of the man. Better is it to be silent for ever than destroy the meaning of such words. Wilson's conversational powers, his wit, his humour, cannot, save in general terms, be described. I humbly confess my own unfitness for such an undertaking; and I have not been able to meet with any one who by faithful repetition can give me aid in this way. I doubt very much

if there is one alive who could. Mr. Lockhart was the only person, who, had he survived to do honour to his friend, might, from the clearness of his perceptive qualities, the pungency of his wit, and the elegance of his language, have done him justice.

Two friends have sent me their reminiscences of social meetings with him about this time. One of them says :—

"During his last five or six years, in common, I believe, with the rest of the world, I saw him in society very rarely. It was said that he came to be fond of solitude, and much to dislike being intruded on. I remember Lord Cockburn giving a picturesque account of an invasion of his privacy. It was something, so far as I can recall the particulars, in this way. There was a party which it was supposed he should have joined, but he did not. They forced their way to his den, and, he being seated in the middle of the room, walked round and round him in solemn, silent, and weird-like procession, he equally silent and regardless of their presence, only showing, by a slight curl of the corner of his mouth, that he was internally enjoying the humour of the thing.

"The last time I met him in society was an occasion not to be easily forgotten. It was one of those stated evening receptions (Tuesdays and Fridays) which brightened the evening of Jeffrey's life. Nothing whatever now exists in Edinburgh that can convey to a younger generation any impression of the charms of that circle. If there happened to be any stranger in Edinburgh much worth seeing, you were sure to meet

him there. The occasion I refer to was dealt with exactly as the reception of a distinguished stranger, though he was a stranger living among ourselves. There came a rumour up stairs that Professor Wilson had arrived, and a buzz and expectation, scarcely less keen among those who had never met him, than among others who wondered what change the years since they had last met him in festivity had wrought. I could see none. He was on abstinence regimen, and eschewed the mulled claret consecrated to those meetings, but he was genial, brilliant, and even jovial. If he had become a hermit, it was evident that solitude had not visited him."

My other correspondent met the Professor at a dinner-party at Lord Robertson's, the last party of the kind, I think, he ever was induced to be present at. "The party was especially joyous and genial. After the ladies had left the room, the host, in a short mock-heroic speech,[1] moved that I should 'take the chair of

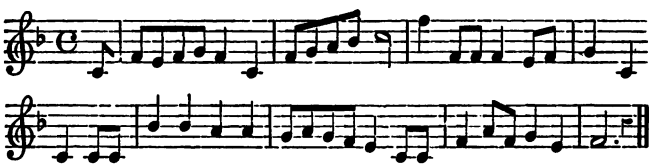
[1] Of Lord Robertson's mock-heroic speeches, Mr. Lockhart gives a vivid description in his account of the Burns dinner of 1818:—"The last of these presidents (Mr. Patrick Robertson), a young counsellor, of very rising reputation and most pleasant manner, made his approach to the chair amidst such a thunder of acclamation, as seems to be issuing from the cheeks of the Bacchantes, when Silenus gets astride on his ass, in the famous picture of Rubens. Once in the chair, there was no fear of his quitting it while any remained to pay homage due to his authority. He made speeches, one chief merit of which consisted (unlike Epic Poems) in their having neither beginning, middle, nor end. He sung songs in which music was not. He proposed toasts in which meaning was not. But over everything that he said there was flung such a radiance of sheer mother-wit, that there was no difficulty in seeing the want of *meaning* was no involuntary want. By the perpetual dazzle of his wit, by the cordial flow of his good-humour, but, above all, by the cheering influence of his broad,

the meeting,' which was duly seconded by the Honourable Lauderdale Maule, of the 79th Highlanders. Upon modestly declining to accept of the honour, I was informed that, if I persisted in my refusal, I should be removed from the room by a policeman for contempt of court! I then at once moved up to the head of the table and seated myself, having on my right hand the gallant and accomplished officer above mentioned, and on my left the grand-looking old Professor, with his eye of fire, and his noble countenance full of geniality and kindness. Lord Robertson, as was his wont several years before his death, sat on the left-hand side, two or three seats from the top. Of that goodly company, those three I have just mentioned have passed away. One incident, I remember, of that dinner-party. Robertson, with affectionate earnestness, but from which he

happy face, seen through its halo of punch steam (for even the chair had by this time got enough of the juice of the grape), he contrived to diffuse over us all, for a long time, one genial atmosphere of unmingled mirth." The remarks I have already made as to the difficulty of adequately recording the expressions of original humour, where the felicity consists in the expression and accessories as much as in the mere words, apply equally to the wit or humour of Robertson. I venture, however, to give one example that occurs to me, out of perhaps hundreds that might be remembered, of his peculiar and invincible power of closing all controversy by the broadest form of *reductio ad absurdum*. At a dinner party, a learned and pedantic Oxonian was becoming very tiresome with his Greek erudition, which he insisted on pouring forth on a variety of topics more or less recondite. At length, at a certain stage of the discussion of some historical point, Robertson turned round, and fixing his large eyes on the Don, said, with a solemnly judicial air, "I rather think, sir, Dionysius of Halicarnassus is against you there." "I beg your pardon," said the Don, quickly, "Dionysius did not flourish for ninety years after that period." "Oh," rejoined Patrick, with an expression of face that must be imagined, "I made a mistake. I meant *Thaddeus of Warsaw*." After that the discussion went no farther in the Greek channel.

could not altogether exclude his peculiar humorous style of illustration, proposed the health of his friend, Professor Wilson. The Professor replied with feeling, but, at the same time, gave Robertson a rejoinder in Patrick's own style. 'I have known him,' said the Professor, 'since his early manhood; I remember his beautiful hair—intensely red! Knew him! I produced him; I educed him; and I occasionally snuffed him' (here the Professor stretched out his arm in the direc tion of Robertson's head, making the motion with his hand as if it held snuffers). 'It is said, I believe, my friend is a wit; this I deny; he never was, is not, and never can be a wit; I admit his humour, humour peculiarly his own—unctuous and unmistakable.' In the course of the evening, the Professor sang his favourite song of the 'Sailor's Life at Sea,' and with what power, with what sailor-like *abandon*, and in the concluding stanzas, when he describes the 'Sailor's death at Sea,' with what simple pathos! it is indescribable, but the effect was visible on every one who heard him. Later on, he volunteered 'Auld Lang Syne,' and often as I have heard the song, and by many good singers, I never heard before, nor ever will again, such a rendering of it. Burns himself would have been glad and proud to have joined in the chorus! I met Wilson one or two days after in Hanover Street. He accosted me. I remarked that never till that night at Robertson's had I ever really met '*The Professor*.' He said it was a pleasant evening, and that 'Peter' was very good. 'But, Sir,' said he, 'a very curious circumstance happened to myself; I awoke next morning singing,

ay, and a very accurate version too of the words and music of that quaint ballad of yours, "The Goulden Vanitee;" curious thing, Sir, wasn't it?' and with a sly look of humour, he turned and walked away."[1]

[1] This quaint ballad, the author of which is unknown, is worth giving in a note, but without the magic of the singer's voice it reads but tamely.

THE GOULDEN VANITEE.

There was a gallant ship,
And a gallant ship was she,
Eek iddle dee, and the Lowlands low;
And she was called "The Goulden Vanitee,"
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

She had not sailed a league,
A league but only three,
Eek, etc.,
When she came up with a French Gallee,
As she sailed, etc.

Out spoke the little cabin-boy,
Out spoke he,
Eek, etc.;
"What will you give me if I sink that French Gallee
As ye sail, etc.

Out spoke the captain,
Out spoke he,
Eek, etc.;
"We 'll gi'e ye an estate in the North Countree,"
As we sail, etc.

"Then row me up *ticht*
In a black bull's skin,
Eek, etc.,

And throw me o'er deck-buird, sink I or swim,"
As ye sail, etc.

So they've row'd him up *richt*
In a black bull's skin:
Eek, etc.,
And have thrown him o'er deck-buird, sink he or soom,
As they sail, etc.

About and about,
And about went he,
Eek, etc.,
Until he came up with the French Gallee
As they sailed, etc.

Oh! some were playing cards,
And some were playing dice:
Eek, etc.,
When he took out an Instrument, bored thirty holes at twice!
As they sailed, etc.

Then some they ran with cloaks,
And some they ran with caps,
Eek, etc.,
To try if they could stap the saut-water draps,
As they sailed, etc.

About and about,
And about went he,
Eek, etc.,
Until he cam back to the Goulden Vanitee,
As they sailed, etc.

"Now throw me o'er a rope,
And pu' me up on buird:
Eek, etc.,
And prove unto me as guid as your word:"
As ye sail, etc.

"We'll no' throw you o'er a rope,
Nor pu' you up on buird,
Eek, etc.,
Nor prove unto you as guid as our word,"
As we sail, etc.

Out spoke the little cabin-boy,
Out spoke he,
Eek, etc.,
" Then hang me I'll sink ye as I sunk the French Gallee,"
As you sail, etc.

But they've thrown him o'er a rope,
And have pu'd him up on buird,
Eek, etc.,
And have proved unto him far better than their word:
As they sailed, etc.

I am indebted for the words and the music to my friend Mr. P. S. Fraser.

CHAPTER XVII.

CLOSING YEARS.

1849–54.

In the year 1849, the first of a series of beautiful papers from my father's pen appeared in *Blackwood*, entitled "Dies Boreales." They are ten in number, and to me are more attractive than any of his other writings, as they are not only the result of the last efforts of his matured strength put forth ere the night came, but contain the very essence of his experience. Some, no doubt, will be ready to compare them with the "Noctes," and complain that they contain less variety of character and stirring incident. To compensate for that want, however, they have certain deeper qualities. The discussions they contain on some of the highest questions of morals, and the criticisms on some of the masterpieces of ancient and modern poetry, appear to me to be of the very highest value. In the first of these papers some noble thoughts will be found upon the rituals of the Church, from which I should like to extract his definition of what composes the Scottish service :—

"The Scottish service comprehends prayer, praise, doctrine ; all three necessary verbal arts amongst Christians met, but each in utmost simplicity. The praise, which unites the voices of the congregation, must be

written. The prayer, which is the turning towards God of the soul of the shepherd upon behalf of the flock, and upon his own, must be unwritten, unpremeditated, else it is not prayer. Can the heart ever want fitting words? The teaching must be to the utmost forethought, at some time or at another, as to the matter. The teacher must have secured his intelligence of the matter ere he opens his mouth. But the form, which is of expedience only, he must very loosely have considered. That is the theory. It presumes that capable men, full of zeal, and sincerity, and love —fervent servants and careful shepherds—have been chosen under higher guidance. It supposes the holy fire of the new-born Reformation—of the newly regenerated Church, to continue undamped, inextinguishable.

"The fact answers to the theory more or less. The original thought—simplicity of worship—is to the utmost expressed when the chased Covenanters are met on the greensward between the hillside and the brawling brook, under the coloured or uncoloured sky. Understand that, when their descendants meet within walls beneath roofs, they *would* worship after the manner of their hunted ancestors."

My inclination would lead me to say something more of the "Dies," but I must leave them, trusting that fresh readers of my father's works will seek them out, and read him in the same spirit as he himself did those great minds that preceded him.

One more domestic change took place to make him for a time feel somewhat lonely. His youngest daughter, Jane Emily, left him for a home of her

own. On the 11th of April 1849, she was married to Mr. William Edmondstoune Aytoun, Professor of Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. But his second son, Blair, was yet left to cheer him in his now circumscribed household; discharging with devotion duties of affection, until broken health obliged him unwillingly to leave Edinburgh, and seek change of scene. The remaining portion of this year, like many others, was spent at his own fireside; the coming and going of his family forming the only variety of the day, not unfrequently concluded by some amusement for his grandchildren. A favourite walk with them was to the Zoological Gardens. Wonderful diversions were met with there, and much entertaining talk there was about the wild beasts; not always, however, confined to the amusement of the little children who walked with him; for he generally managed to find auditors who, if not directly addressed, were willing to linger near and listen.

There is something expressive in the words, "Little Ways." Every one has seen in intimate intercourse with his fellow-creatures, habits and peculiarities that are in themselves trifling enough, but so belonging to the person that they can be looked upon only as his "ways," and are never for an instant disputed, rather encouraged. My father had a number of these "ways," all of so playful a kind, so much proceeding from the affection of his nature, that I can scarcely think of him without them, coming, as they do, out of the heart of his domesticities, when moving about his house, preparing for the forenoon lecture, or sitting simply at

home after the labour of the day. I would not as a matter of taste introduce an ordinary toilette to the attention of the reader, but with the Professor this business was so *like himself*, so original, that some account of it will rather amuse than offend. By fits and starts the process of shaving was carried on; walking out of his dressing-room into the study; lathering his chin one moment with soap, then standing the next to take a look at some fragment of a lecture, which would absorb his attention, until the fact of being without coat, and having his face half-covered with soap was entirely forgotten, the reverie only disturbed by a ring at the bell, when he would withdraw to proceed with the "toilette's tedious task," which, before completion, would be interrupted by various caprices, such as walking out of one room into another; then his waistcoat was put on; after that, perhaps, he had a hunt among old letters and papers for the lecture, now lost, which a minute before he held in his hand. Off again to his dressing-room, bringing his coat along with him, and, diving into its pockets, he would find the lost lecture, in the form of the tattered fragment of a letter, which, to keep together, he was obliged to ask his daughter to sew for him with needle and thread, an operation requiring considerable skill, the age of the paper having reduced the once shining Bath post to a species of crumbling wool, not willing to be transfixed or held in order by such an arrangement as that of needlework. At last, he would get under weigh; but the tying of his shoes and the winding up of his watch were the finishing touches to this disjointed toilette. These little

operations he never, as far as I remember, did for himself; they were offices I often had the pleasure of performing. The watch was a great joke. In the first place, he seldom wore his own, which never by any chance was right, or treated according to the natural properties of a watch.[1] Many wonderful escapes this ornament (if so it may be called) had from fire, water, and sudden death. All that was required of it at his hands was that it should go, and point at some given hour. His own account of its treatment is so exactly the sort of system pursued, that this little imaginative bit of writing will describe its course correctly: "We wound up our chronometer irregularly, by fits and starts, thrice a day, perhaps, or once a week, till it fell into an intermittent fever, grew delirious, and gave up the ghost." His snuff-box, too, was a source of agony to him; it was always lost, at least the one he wished to use. He had a curious sort of way of mislaying things; even that broad-brimmed hat of his sometimes went amissing; his gloves, his pocket-handkerchief, everything, just the moment he wished to be off to his class,

[1] A sufferer sends me the following anecdote:—"While delivering one of the Inaugural Addresses to the Philosophical Institution, of which he was president, in the full career of that impassioned eloquence for which he was so distinguished, he somewhat suddenly made a pause in his address. Looking round on the platform of faces beside him, he put the emphatic question, 'Can any of you gentlemen lend me a watch?' Being very near him, I handed him mine, but a moment had hardly passed ere I repented doing so. Grasping the chronometer in his hand, the Professor at once re-commenced his oration, and, in 'suiting the action to the word,' I expected it would soon be smashed to pieces; but I was agreeably disappointed, as, after swaying it to and fro for some time, he at last laid it gently down on the cushion before him."

seemed to become invisible. No doubt all these minor evils of life were vividly before him when he makes his imaginary editor give occasional vent to his feelings in the "Noctes."[1]

These are some of the "ways." Gas, as I have said, he could not endure, having once blown it out, and nearly suffocated a whole family. It was the first duty of the servant to place the tin candlestick and snuffers on his table in the morning. That and his inkstand were two articles of *vertu* not to be removed from his sight. The inkstand, a little earthenware image of Arion on his dolphin, I preserve with care and pride.[2]

He was in his latter years passionately fond of children: his grandchildren were his playmates. A favourite pastime with them was fishing in imaginary rivers and lochs, in boats and out of them; the scenery rising around the anglers with magical rapidity, for one glori-

[1] "Who the devil has stolen my gloves? cries the same celebrated literary character, as, stamping, he blows his nails, and bangs the front door after him, sulkily shaking his naked mawlies on the steps with Sir John Frost.

"Hang it! had we three hundred and sixty-five snuff-boxes, not one of them would be suffered to lie still on this table; but the whole gang shall be dismissed, men and women alike, they are all thieves. You have not seen my slippers, you say, sirrah?—Well then, we shall use our interest to get you admitted into the Blind Asylum.

"Hold your confounded tongue, sir, and instantly fetch us our hat. What else have you got to do in this life, you lazy hound, but attend to our hat? And have you no fears, you infidel?"

[2] It was bought by my mother in a small shop in Stockbridge in 1820. That shop was then kept by a young man, who has since risen to great eminence in the world, having gained by his acquirements and extensive antiquarian knowledge, a name of European fame. In his private life, he is beloved and respected by all who know him, and among my own friends there is no one I esteem more highly than Mr. Robert Chambers.

ous reality was there to create the whole, fishing-rods, reels and basket, line and flies—the entire gear. What shouts and screams of delight as "the fun grew fast and furious," and fish were caught by dozens, Goliah getting his phantom trout unhooked by his grandfather, who would caution him not to let his line be entangled in the trees; and so they would go on. The confidence which children place in their elders is one of the most convincing proofs of the love bestowed on them. At that period of life no idea of age crosses the mind. The child of six imagines himself surrounded by companions of his own age in all he sees. The grandfather is an abstract of love, good humour, and kindness; his venerable aspect and dignified bearing are lost sight of in the overflowing benevolence of his heart. Noah's ark, trumpets, drums, pencils, puzzles, dolls, and all the delightful games of infant life are supposed to possess equal interest in his eyes. I have often seen this unwearied playmate sitting in the very heart of all these paraphernalia, taking his part according to orders given, and actually going at the request of some of these urchins upstairs to the nursery to fetch down a forgotten toy, or on all-fours on the ground helping them to look for some lost fragment. With all this familiarity there was a certain feeling of awe, and care was taken not to offend. Sometimes the little group, becoming too noisy, would be suddenly dispersed: Christopher being in no humour to don his "sporting-jacket," closed for a brief season the study-door, intimating that serious work had begun.

A nervous or fidgety mother would have been some-

what startled at his mode of treating babies; but I was so accustomed to all his doings that I never for a moment interfered with them. His granddaughter went through many perils. He had great pleasure in amusing himself with her long before she could either walk or speak. One day I met him coming down stairs with what appeared to be a bundle in his hands, but it was my baby which he clutched by the back of the clothes, her feet kicking through her long robe, and her little arms striking about evidently in enjoyment of the reckless position in which she was held. He said this way of carrying a child was a discovery he had made, that it was quite safe, and very good for it. It was all very well so long as he remembered what he was about; but more than once this large good-natured baby was left all alone to its own devices. Sometimes he would lay her down on the rug in his room and forget she was there; when, coming into the drawing-room without his plaything, and being interrogated as to where she was, he would remember he had left her lying on the floor; and bringing her back with a joke, still maintaining he was the best nurse in the world, "but I will take her upstairs to Sally," and so, according to his new discovery, she was carried back unscathed to the nursery. He did not always treat the young lady with this disrespect, for she was very often in his arms when he was preparing his thoughts for the lecture-hour. A pretty tableau it was to see them in that littered room, among books and papers—the only bright things in it—and the SPARROW, too, looking on while he hopped about the table, not quite certain whether he should not affect a

little envy at the sight of the new inmate, whose chubby hands were clutching and tearing away at the long hair, which of right belonged to the audacious bird. So he thought, as he chirped in concert with the baby's screams of delight, and dared at last to alight upon the shoulder of the unconscious Professor, absorbed in the volume he held in his hand.

Such were the little scenes that recall "the grandfather" to me; and I hope I have not wearied my readers by this detail about babies and children, but that I may have added, by common facts, a tenderer association to his name, claiming from those who only knew his intellect respect for the loving sympathies that made home so sweet.

I have now come to the year 1850, when my father was living alone in his house in Gloucester Place, leaving it occasionally to visit his son John at Billholm, as two letters bearing the date of that year show. They are both addressed to his second son, Blair, and are written in his usual kind and home-loving spirit. One of them announces the death of his faithful old servant, Billy Balmer:—

"LIXMOUNT, 14*th August* 1850.

"MY DEAR BLAIR,—Poor Billy died here yesterday night about nine o'clock, so quietly, that we scarcely knew when he was gone. On Friday, he is to be interred in the adjacent cemetery. His wife had come from Bowness.

"I think of going to Billholm *on Saturday* for ten days. Perhaps you will write to me there *on getting*

this, and tell me how you are going on. Your letter to Jane was most acceptable to all of us.

"I will write to you from Billholm on receiving a letter from you. All well. Jane Aytoun and Golly left for Billholm yesterday. Kind regards to all friends at Kirkebost, and believe me ever, your most affectionate father, J. W."

Of Billy a few more words may be said. The last time my father visited Westmoreland was in the year 1848. Whether his old boatman fancied, from being no longer young, that he would soon be separated from his master for ever I cannot say, but soon after he took a longing to visit Scotland. The railway from Kendal to Edinburgh had been open some short time, but Billy was a stern Conservative, and could not suffer the idea of modern reform in any shape; he considered railways generally not only destructive to the country at large, but to individual life in particular—a species of infernal machine for the purpose of promoting sudden death.[1] With these feelings, perfectly orthodox in the breast of such a primitive son of creation, it is natural to suppose that he would shun the locomotive. So one fine day he bade farewell to "pretty Bowness," and trudged manfully on foot all the way into Eskdale Muir, arriving, weary and worn out, after a couple of days' walking, at the hospitable door of Billholm.

[1] Billy's horror at railways appears to have been shared by others who ought to have known better. Witness Wordsworth's lines on the projected Kendal and Windermere Railway, commencing—

"Is there no nook of English ground secure from rash assault?"

There he was received, and he tarried for some months; but kind though the young master was, he longed for the old. After a time he left the "house that shines well where it stands," and made his way to Edinburgh. True devotion like that met with the reward due to it, and Billy was re-established in his master's service, dressed after the fashion of his early days, in sailor guise, with pleasant work to do, and a glass of ale daily to cheer his old soul.

I never knew of any love to mortal so true as that of Billy for my father. It was like that of David for Jonathan, "passing the love of women." Cheerful reminiscences he had of past labour by the lake-side; then came kindness and care to soothe the weakness and troubles of advancing age; and last of all, the touch of a tender hand by the dying bed. Poor old man; he had come to pay me a visit at Lixmount, where I was then residing, when he took his last illness; he lay some weeks, fading gradually away. Before his last hour came, I sent to let my father know I thought it was at hand; my message brought him immediately. He walked the distance—about two miles from Gloucester Place; and walking at that time was beginning to fatigue him, so he arrived heated and tired, but went at once, without taking rest, to his old comrade's room, where he found him conscious, though too weak to speak. Billy's eye lighted up the moment it rested on the beloved face before him, and he made an effort to raise his hand—the weather-beaten hand that had so often pulled an oar on Windermere; it was lying unnerved and white,

barely able to return the pressure so tenderly given. The other held in its helpless grasp a black silk handkerchief which he seemed desirous of protecting. As the day wore on life wore away. The scene was simple and sad. Pale and emaciated, the old man rested beneath the white drapery of his bed, noiseless almost as a shadow; while my father sat beside him still fresh in face and powerful in frame, exhibiting in his changing countenance the emotions of solemn thought and a touched heart. Soon the change came; a stronger breathing for a moment, a few faint sighs, and then that unmistakable stillness nowhere to be heard but in the chamber of death. The old boatman had passed to other shores. The handkerchief he grasped in his hand was one given to him by his master; he had desired his wife to lay it beside him. It was a something tangible when memory was leaving him, that revived in his heart recollections of the past. Billy Balmer was interred in the Warriston Cemetery. My father walked at the head of his coffin, and laid him in his grave.

The next letter is written in September:—

"My dear Blair,—Golly and Jane having both written to you from Billholm, I need say little of my visit to it. You know, too, of the sudden appearance of the dear Doctor.[1] We left them all well on the Wednesday preceding the Queen's arrival. But we did not go to see her *entrée* on Thursday, and so missed what I hear was a sight worth seeing. On Friday I attended, with about twelve other professors, the stone-laying,[2]

[1] Dr. Blair.

[2] The foundation-stone of the New National Gallery on the Mound.

which was pretty. The Prince spoke well, and to the purpose. On Saturday we dined with Mrs. R. Chambers, and met De Quincey and his daughters and a few others. In the evening dropt in about 150 literary persons of all ages and sexes; and I never saw the Doctor in such force. His tongue never lay, and he would have sat till midnight; but Sabbath broke up the party. Next day Mary came for us in her carriage, but no Doctor was to be found, so we went to Lixmount without him, and at half-past seven he appeared in a brougham, having lost himself in some quarries. On Tuesday, he dined with Mrs. Pitman, and to-day accompanies her to the Horticultural; so I do not expect to see him again till Friday. He is stronger than I ever knew him, and in great spirits; and I am as kind to him as possible. I expect he will stay yet for ten days, when he returns to Abberly to accompany Mrs. Busk to London. I am not without hopes that he will pay us a visit early in spring. He sends his love to you.

"Gordon is the greatest man in Edinburgh,—next to him the Provost and Mr. Moxey.[1] The place seems quiet again as before, but the excitement was great. Dear Jane had a bad attack two days before we left Billholm, but was up the day we left, and I trust quite hardy again. I am much the better of the dear Doctor's visit, and am in good spirits. You are not forgotten in Skye by any of us; and we all rejoice to think what a stock of health you are laying in for the winter. I am glad the guardsman and lady are pleasant. When the Doctor goes I shall be able to know my own motions.

[1] Superintendent of Police.

I must go then for a few days to St. Andrews. After that I will write to you.—Meanwhile God bless you, ever prays your affectionate father, J. W.

"Give my very kindest regards to the Doctor and good lady."

The "dear Doctor," whose name has so frequently been mentioned in these pages, claims a few more words here. The schoolboy of olden days, beloved by all for his gentleness and goodness, singing out, as Miss Sym describes him, "Ohon a ree! ohon a ree!"—whom she finds "groping in the press, howking out a book, part of which was read with his peculiar burr." These simple words give us the impression that there was a something about him different from other boys. As a man, I never saw any one like him; and truly he continued his love for "howking out books." How much he read, and to what purpose, may be clearly seen from the correspondence between himself and his friend, to whom, in exterior and manner, he formed a strange contrast. The gentleness of his movements was remarkable. There was almost a timidity of character expressed in his bearing at first sight; but the wonderful intelligence of his countenance, the fine formation of his head, dispelled that impression, and the real meaning was read in perceiving that modesty, not fear, conquered his spirit, taking from him that confidence which the consciousness of power almost always gives. It was similarity of studies and sentiments that made them so much one; for of athletic sports in any shape, Dr. Blair knew nothing practically, nor cared. The course

and habit of his life were like the smooth, deep water; serene, undisturbed to outward eye, and the very repose that was about him had a charm for the restless, active energy of his friend, who turned to this gentle and meek nature for mental rest. I have often seen them sitting together in the quiet retirement of the study, perfectly absorbed in each other's presence, like school-boys in the abandonment of their love for each other, occupying one seat between them, my father, with his arm lovingly embracing "the dear doctor's" shoulders, playfully pulling the somewhat silvered locks to draw his attention to something in the tome spread out on their knees, from which they were both reading. Such discussions as they had together hour upon hour! Shakspere, Milton—always the loftiest themes—never weary in doing honour to the great souls from whom they had learnt so much. Their voices were different too: Dr. Blair's soft and sweet as that of a woman; my father's sonorous, sad, with a nervous tremor: each revealing the peculiar character of the man. Much of the Professor's deep thought and love of philosophy grew out of this friendship. The two men were mutually invaluable to each other. The self-confidence of the stronger man did not tyrannize over the more gentle, whose modesty never sunk into submission, nor quailed in presence of a bolder power. Their knowledge was equal; the difference lay in their natural powers. The one bright, versatile, and resolute, has left his works behind him; while the other, never satisfied, always doing and undoing, has unfortunately given but little to the world; and it is to be feared the grave will close

over this remarkable man, leaving no other trace of his rare mind and delightful nature than that which friendship hallows in its breast. The last visit Dr. Blair paid to his friend, their time was exclusively devoted to the study of Milton, and the result of these hours finds noble record in the "Dies Boreales." The subject is approached with a reverence such as ever marks a spirit willing to bow before a great power. The inner purpose of the poet's soul claims the critic's every thought, and he advances with well-ordered steps from the beautiful portals, opened by invocation to the muse, into the heart of the splendid structure, leading his reader with unrivalled skill into lofty chambers of thought and imagery.

It is now time to speak of those days in which the sand was running quickly down in the glass. A change which the eye of affection is not always the first to mark, could not, however, be concealed from his family. In the winter of 1850, symptoms of breaking up of health obliged the Professor, for the first time, to absent himself from College duties. I have received an account of one particular illness, the exact statement of which did not, at the time it took place, come from his lips. Indeed, as his health decidedly weakened, so did he in proportion try to rise above it. The same interest in his work which kindled his energies in early years, glowed with unabated ardour in old age. I give it as it was sent to me :[1]—

"One day Professor Wilson was late in appearing ; perhaps ten or twelve minutes after the class hour—

[1] By the Rev. A. B. Grosart, Kinross.

an unusual thing with him, for he was punctual. We had seen him go into his private room. We got uneasy, and at last it was proposed that I should go in, and see what it was that detained him. To my latest hour I will remember the sight I saw on entering. Having knocked and received no answer, I gently opened the door, and there I found the Professor lying at full length on the floor, with his gown on. Instinctively I rubbed his head, and raised it up, kneeling with the noble head resting on my breast. I could not, of course, move. But in a few minutes in came other students wondering in turn what was keeping *me*, and we together raised the Professor up into his chair. I caught the words 'God bless you!' Gradually he got better, and we forced him to sit still, and never dream of lecturing that day or for a time. He was very reluctant to consent. I remember too that we spoke of calling a cab, but he said 'No,' it would shake him too much. In about half-an-hour he walked home. We announced to the class what had taken place, and very sore our hearts were. I think the Professor remained away three weeks, and on his return expressed glowingly and touchingly his gratitude to 'his dear young friends.'"

This was his last year of public labour. The whole session had been one of toil to him, and the exertions he made to compass his work could not be concealed.

His last Medallist says :[1]—

"The end did not come till his work for that session was done. On Friday he distributed prizes, and heard

[1] Mr. Taylor Innes.

the students read their essays; taking particular interest in those of one gentleman who, with great ability, attacked his whole system, and of another who fancied that he had discovered a *via media* between the two great factions. Then he dismissed us, and the cheers and plaudits of his class rang in his ear for the last time. On Monday I called to get his autograph on one of my books; but the blow had already to some extent fallen, for he was unable even to write his name. Twice after this I saw him, at his own request, and always on the subject of his lectures; for he was bent on what he called a 'reconstruction' of his theory for the ensuing session; while it was but too plain to those around him that he was not likely to see the College again. The old lion sat in his arm-chair, yellow-maned and toothless, prelecting with the old volubility and eloquence, and with occasionally the former flash of the bright blue eye, soon drooping into dulness again. I still remember his tremulous 'God bless you!' as the door closed for the last time. How different from that fresh and vigorous old age in which he had moved among us so royally the year before!"

The relaxation of summer holidays brought no satisfactory improvement in his health. The truth lay heavy on his spirit—that the usefulness of his life was drawing to its close. Day by day some strength went out of him, and he must bid farewell to "his children," as he was wont to call his students. The freshness of his glory was no longer in him; "the bow was not renewed in his hand." Long and mournful meditation took possession of him; days of silence revealed the depth

of his suffering; and it was only by fits and starts that anything like composure visited his heart. Still did he speak of returning to his labours at the commencement of the session; and, in order to regain strength, he proposed to make an excursion into the Highlands, provided that a family party went with him. There was no difficulty in arranging this; and in June, accompanied by his two eldest daughters, his sons John and Blair, his son-in-law Professor Ferrier, his brother James, and his niece Henrietta Wilson, he set out for Luib; at which rendezvous he was joined by Mr. Glassford Bell and his eldest daughter. Luib, as we have seen from his letter in 1845, is a pretty wayside hostelry in the central Highlands of Perthshire, about seven miles beyond Killin. There we encamped for a fortnight, encountering such caprices of weather as generally pass over the mountain districts of Scotland. The more adventurous of the party treated the weather with contempt, taking long walks. Of these were Mr. James Wilson and his niece, who wandered over large stretches of ground, but few of the others could compare notes of adventure with them. Had my father been able to endure fatigue, we too would have had something to boast of; but he was unable to do more than loiter by the river-side close in the neighbourhood of the inn—never without his rod. Alas, how changed the manner of his sport from that of his prime! We must make use of his own illustration as he speaks of the past and present; for North's exploits in angling are varied enough to be brought forward at any point of his life. He says to the Shepherd,—

"In me the passion of the sport is dead—or say rather dull; yet have I gentle enjoyment still in the 'Angler's silent Trade.'" So seemed it then on the banks of the Dochart.

"But Heavens, my dear James! How in youth and prime of manhood too, I used to gallop to the glens, like a deer, over a hundred heathery hills, to devour the dark rolling river, or the blue breezy loch! How leaped my heart to hear the thunder of the nearing waterfall! and lo, yonder flows, at last, the long dim shallow rippling hazel-banked line of music among the broomy braes, all astir with back-fins on its surface; and now the *feed is on*, teeming with swift-shooting, bright-bounding, and silver-shining scaly life, most beauteous to behold, at every soft alighting of the deceptive line, captivating and irresistible even among a shower of natural leaf-born flies, a swarm in the air from the mountain woods."

A picture of the past visiting the present, as time glides on, making more perceptible the cruel changes which come to mortal strength. How now do his feet touch the heather? Not as of old, with a bound, but with slow and unsteady step, supported on the one hand by his stick, while the other carries his rod. The breeze gently moves his locks, no longer glittering with the light of life, but dimmed by its decay. Yet are his shoulders broad and unbent. The lion-like presence is somewhat softened down, but not gone. He surely will not venture into the deeps of the water, for only one hand is free for "a cast," and those large stones, now slippery with moss, are dangerous stumbling-blocks in

the way. Besides, he promised his daughters he would not wade, but, on the contrary, walk quietly with them by the river's edge, there gliding "at its own sweet will." Silvery bands of pebbled shore, leading to loamy-coloured pools, dark as the glow of a southern eye, how could he resist the temptation of near approach? In he goes, up to the ankles, then to the knees, tottering every other step, but never falling. Trout after trout he catches, small ones certainly, but plenty of them. Into his pocket with them, all this time manœuvring in the most skilful manner both stick and rod; until weary, he is obliged to rest on the bank, sitting with his feet in the water, laughing at his daughters' horror, and obstinately continuing the sport in spite of all remonstrance. At last he gives in, and retires. Wonderful to say, he did not seem to suffer from these imprudent liberties. Occasionally he was contented to remain away from the water, enjoying the less exciting interest of watching others. His son John delighted him by the great achievement of capturing two fine salmon, their united weight being about forty-five pounds. It was a pleasant holiday-time. There was no lack of merriment, and though my father was not in his best spirits, he rallied now and then from the gloom that oppressed him at the outset of the excursion.

On his return to Edinburgh, he was prevailed on by his brother Robert to pay him a visit at Woodburn. While there, the painful question of his retirement from public life was agreed on, and caused him much mental distress. He sent in his resignation, after thirty years' service. The remaining portion of this autumn was spent at Billholm.

His retirement from active life was a step that interested all parties, and Government was not backward in rewarding the faithful services of one who, though not of their party, merited grateful consideration. The following letters will explain my words. One is addressed to Sheriff Gordon; the other to James Moncreiff, Esq., Lord Advocate:—

"GWYDYR HOUSE, WHITEHALL,
August 30, 1851.

"MY DEAR GORDON,—The enclosed will show you with what great cordiality my suggestion has been received by Lord John, and this post conveys directly to Professor Wilson an intimation from Lord John Russell, conceived in terms which, I think, cannot fail to be most gratifying to him, that the Queen has granted him a pension of £300 a year. I have sent Lord John's letter direct, as I think it will in that way best bear its real character of being a spontaneous tribute by the Government and the country.

"And now let me say that nothing that has happened to me since I held office has given me so much real pleasure as being permitted to convey to so old and steadfast a friend as yourself, intelligence which I am sure must greatly gratify you. I trust, under Providence, it may be fruitful to your illustrious relative of a long and honoured old age, and of comfort and happiness to all your circle.—Believe me ever, yours very sincerely, J. MONCREIFF."

"HOLYROOD PALACE, 28*th August* 1851.

"MY DEAR LORD ADVOCATE,—I have complied at once

with your wishes, and immediately obtained the Queen's approbation. I send the enclosed letter to you that there may be no unfair surprise in communicating the Queen's intentions to Professor Wilson. Be so good as to take care that this letter is given him in such a manner as may be most agreeable to his feelings.—
Yours truly, J. RUSSELL."

As soon as Mr. Gordon received the intelligence that it had pleased her Majesty to bestow her bounty on Professor Wilson, he and I set off immediately to Billholm as messengers of the pleasant news. We arrived there late at night, and found every one in bed. The reason for our sudden appearance was not long in being made known, and in a short time the whole household was astir. The Professor rose from his bed, supper was set out before us, and a very joyful repast we had; every one expressing their grateful pleasure at this unexpected recognition of his public services. We were scarcely inclined to retire to our rooms, and remained talking till early morning. My father was much touched by the delicate tact of Lord John Russell's communication to the Lord Advocate, couched in terms indicative of a tender nobility of soul.

I know not if the acknowledgment of her Majesty's bounty is a fragment, or the whole of a letter addressed to Earl Russell, but it came into my hands lately, and as being written by my father, I imagine it was a copy of the letter sent, or at least part of it. Whatever the case may be, it will at least be interesting, and I therefore give it:—

"BILLHOLM, LANGHOLM.

"MY LORD,—That her Majesty has been graciously pleased to bestow on me, in the evening of my life, so unexpected a mark of her bounty, fills my heart with the profoundest gratitude, which will dwell there while that heart continues to beat. I beg your Lordship to lay this its poor expression with reverence at her Majesty's feet.

"For your kindly sentiments towards my professional and literary character, I would return such acknowledgment as is due from one who knows how to estimate the high qualities of the house of Russell."

We remained a week or two at Billholm, my father returning with us to Edinburgh. As winter approached, many a thought crossed his heart of his lost labour, and cheerfulness was hard to keep up. He seemed disinclined for any sort of amusement, and remained within doors almost entirely; unable to find pleasure even in the pastimes of his grandchildren, at one time so great an amusement to him. Something of a settled melancholy rested on his spirit, and for days he would scarcely utter a word, or allow a smile to lighten up his face. He was as a man whose "whole head is sick and the whole heart faint." That such a change for a time should take place, was by no means unnatural. He was not yet stricken in years, the glow within the great mind was still strong, but the pulses of life were weak. So ardent and impulsive a nature could not be expected to lay aside its harness without a pang. Religion alone supported him in the solitude of that altered existence. These dark clouds were possibly as

much due to his enfeebled health as to the belief that the usefulness of his life was over. His brother Robert, who had ever loved him with the tenderest affection, and who sought by every means to soothe his spirit and restore his health, proposed that he should again make his house a home. He did so, taking up his abode at Woodburn,[1] where, from the closing year of 1851 until the autumn of 1852, he resided. If unwearied care and devoted affection could have stayed the increasing malady, which with certain, though often invisible steps, was wearing him away, he had never died. While under that kind roof, there were many days of calm happiness, mingled with others sad enough. The restlessness attending nervous disease is almost as distressing as pain; of which I believe he had but little during the whole course of his decline. He rallied so far when at Woodburn as to be able to write his last papers for *Blackwood's Magazine*—numbers 9 and 10 of "Dies Boreales." There was nothing in that house to disturb study when he was inclined for it. He had a suite of rooms to himself; no noise, no interruptions molested the quiet of his days. Pleasant and cheerful faces surrounded him at a moment's notice. His nieces rallied about him as loving daughters, often watching through the weary hours of sleepless nights by his bedside. Nothing was wanting, yet did the heart "know its own bitterness," in those moments when the cruelty of his disorder laid hold of his spirits, and plunged him, as he expressed it, into a state of "hopeless misery." "Nothing," he said to me, "can give you an idea of how utterly wretched I

[1] Mr. R. S. Wilson's residence, near Dalkeith.

am; my mind is going, I feel it." Then coming directly to the burden of his soul, he would say, "Yes, I know my friends thought me unfit to hold up my head in the class as I ought to do;" then continuing, with an expression of profound solemnity, "I have signed my death-warrant, it is time I should retire." This was so evidently a morbid state of feeling induced by disease, that, distressing as it was to those who witnessed it, one could not but feel satisfied that ere long it would pass away, and a more placid frame of mind ensue. When these brighter hours came—which they did—nothing could be more delightful than his aspect, more playfully charming than his spirit. He scarcely looked like an invalid, or one who would be tormented by the fluctuations of moody humours. Altogether there was a something about him different from his days of defiant strength. Massive as his frame still remained, its power was visibly gone, and a gentle air of submission had taken the place of that stately bearing. His step, that once seemed to ignore the ground beneath his feet, was feeble and unsteady. He no longer had the manner of one who challenged the inroads of time. In these moments he presented a serene and beautiful picture of calm and genial old age. He had not lost his interest in outward things nor yet in those of literature. He writes the subjoined playful note to his son Blair, or rather causes it to be written. The contents of it are evidence of how he intends to occupy his time:—

"WOODBURN, DALKEITH, *4th December* 1851.

"MY DEAR BLAIR,—Anne's[1] fair hand holds the pen.

[1] His niece, the eldest daughter of Mr. R. S. Wilson.

The supply of books was most acceptable. The volume of Pascal was right; but I see there are two others by the same translator, viz., vol. 1st,—'Provincial Letters;' vol. 2d,—'Miscellaneous Letters.' Have you a translation of Cicero's 'De Finibus?' Is there a volume on Philosophy by Price or Dring? also by one Dymond, a Quaker? also by one Oswald, a Scotchman? Sir William Drummond's 'Academical Questions?' That vol. of Lord Jeffrey's collected works containing a Review of Sir William Drummond? That vol. of Lord Jeffrey's works containing a Review of Bishop Warburton? Send the above to my brother Robert. Come out, if convenient, on Saturday.—Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WILSON.

"(Signed by order of the Presbytery.)

"*P.S.*—You may give my regards to Mary, and perhaps to Gordon,—Golly,[1] Adel, Pa, Charles Dickens, and the young lady. JOHN WILSON."

He also kept himself *au courant* with public affairs by reading the journals of the day. His political ardour was not so much abated as to prevent him from expressing his sentiments with his usual animation; and he found an opportunity of giving one last memorable proof of his independence and magninimity of spirit in favour of an illustrious political adversary. In 1852 the representation of the city of Edinburgh became vacant by the dissolution of Parliament. There were three candidates, and one of them was Thomas Bab-

[1] His five grandchildren.

ington Macaulay. During the summer the Professor was more than usually feeble, seldom taking exercise out of doors, but preferring to remain in his own room. Possibly the languor of disease made exertion painful to him, for it was difficult to prevail on him, in the latter portion of his life, to drive or even to sit in the open air. Much to the surprise of the household, he one morning this summer expressed a desire to go into Edinburgh. Unfortunately Mr. Wilson's carriage was not at hand, some of his family having gone into town to make calls. This *contretemps* it was supposed would have diverted his intention to another day. Not so. He sent to Dalkeith for a conveyance, and on its arrival set off with his servant upon his mission, giving no hint as to its nature, but evidently bent upon something of the most engrossing interest and anxiety to himself. On arriving in Edinburgh he drove to Mr. Blackwood's, in George Street, to rest before proceeding farther. Every one rejoiced to see him; and as he drove along many a respectful and glad recognition he received, people wondering if he had come to live and move among them once more. But what had brought him through the dusty roads and hot mid-day sun? He looked wearied and feeble as he got into his carriage to drive away from George Street, apparently without any particular object in view. So might it have been said, for he had not mentioned to any one what had brought him so far—far for an invalid, one who had almost risen from a sick-bed. His mysterious mission to Edinburgh was to give his vote for Thomas Babington Macaulay. When he entered the Committee-room in

St. Vincent Street, supported by his servant, a loud and long cheer was given, expressive both of pleasure at seeing him, and of admiration at the disinterested motive which had brought him there. Mr. Macaulay's recognition of this generous action supplies an interesting sequel to the incident :—

"ROYAL HOTEL, CLIFTON,
July 16, 1852.

"MY DEAR MR. GORDON,—I am truly grateful for your kindness in letting me know how generous a part Professor Wilson acted towards me. From my school-days, when I delighted in the *Isle of Palms* and the *City of the Plague*, I have admired his genius. Politics at a later period made us, in some sense, enemies. But I have long entertained none but kind feelings towards him, and his conduct on Tuesday is not the first proof which he has given that he feels kindly towards me. I hope that you will let him know how much pleasure, and how much pride I felt when I learned he had given me so conspicuous a mark of his esteem.

"With many thanks for your congratulations, believe me, yours most truly, T. B. MACAULAY."[1]

This autumn my father's hand ceased for ever from work. Writing had now become a painful exertion, and nothing shows it more than his manuscript. The few notes he wrote at this time to his son Blair, and

[1] Besides the laudatory critique of the *Lays of Ancient Rome* in *Blackwood*, for December 1842, my father, unless I am misinformed, had once more at least acted a generous part to a political opponent, by reviewing "Croker's Criticisms" on Macaulay's *England*, in two letters, addressed to the Editor of the *Scotsman*, April 18th and 28th, 1849, signed *Aliquis*.

now lying before me, are almost undecipherable, the characters evidently written by a weak and trembling hand. There is nothing of moment in any of them; but as they refer to the work which occupied him at that time, I subjoin them with feelings of painful interest as the last words his hand ever transcribed.[1]

Few as the words of these notes are, we can perceive that his work is one of much interest to him, and that he is bestowing the usual care on its preparation.

There is only one passage which I shall make use of from these last articles, the *Dies Boreales*. Not because it is so beautiful in itself, but by reason of the tender character of the subject. That deep and lasting love which the grave did not destroy—the lost image of his wife—was an ever present theme for the exercise of his soul's submission. Tempered though his sorrow was, he carried it in the recesses of his heart perpetually, and

"*July* 22*d*.

[1] "MY DEAR BLAIR,—I took from Gloucester Place three volumes of Milton, of which one is the second volume of 'Paradise Lost,' 4th edition, Thomas Newton. It contains the first six books, and the note and letter. The first vol. must contain the first six. Can you get it for me, and send it out without delay per train?—Yours affectionately, J. WILSON.

"I want to have Addison's Essay on 'Paradise Lost.'"

"WOODBURN.

"MY DEAR BLAIR,—Your active kindness has done all that could be done about Milton. Look in my room for 'Payne,' Knight's 'Principle of Taste,' and for Kames's 'Elements.'—Yours affectionately,

"J. WILSON."

"WOODBURN, *Thursday Afternoon*.

"MY DEAR BLAIR,—Call at Blackwood's on your way to College (on Saturday), and ask John or the Captain if they have a parcel *for me at Woodburn* from the printer's in the evening; if so, you may stay and bring it by railway, the latest one going.—Yours affectionately,

"J. WILSON."

his last thoughts have been embalmed in this fine passage. The forlorn and widowed heart speaks in every word.

"When the hand of Death has rent in one moment from fond affection the happiness of years, and seems to have left to it no other lot upon Earth than to bleed and mourn, then, in that desolation of the spirit, are discovered what are the secret powers which it bears within itself, out of which it can derive consolation and peace. The Mind, torn by such a stroke from all those inferior human sympathies which, weak and powerless when compared to its own sorrow, can afford it no relief, turns itself to that Sympathy which is without bounds. Ask of the forlorn and widowed heart what is the calm which it finds in those hours of secret thought, which are withdrawn from all eyes? Ask what is that hidden process of Nature by which Grief has led it on to devotion? That attraction of the Soul in its uttermost earthly distress to a source of consolation remote from Earth, is not to be ascribed to a Disposition to substitute one emotion for another, as if it hoped to find relief in dispelling and blotting out the vain passion with which it laboured before; but, in the very constitution of the Soul, the capacities of human and divine affection are linked together, and it is the very depth of its passion that leads it over from the one to the other. Nor is its consolation forgetfulness. But that affection which was wounded becomes even more deep and tender in the midst of the calm which it attains."[1]

[1] *Dies Boreales*, August 1852.

All earthly things now wore for him a solemn aspect. His mind was evidently inclined to meditate upon those truths by which religion exalts moral perceptions, and to bring all his force to test how he could elevate the soul's aspirations before he retired from the field in which he had so long laboured. He humbly looked in the coming days of darkness for the light that rises to the upright, and hopefully awaited the summons that should call him to rest from his labours, and enter into the joy of his Lord.

He remained at Woodburn until the end of the autumn of 1852. Before he left it he had received visits from various old friends. Among the last was his old partner in literature and all the wild audacities of its then unlicensed liberty, John Gibson Lockhart. Much changed he was; more so even than his friend. It was a kind and pleasant meeting. I had prepared Mr. Lockhart to find my father greatly altered, as we drove out together. He afterwards told me he saw no change mentally, but considered him as bright and great as ever. Yet time had done much to destroy the fine frame of the one; the heart-energies and interests of the other; nor could it be but a melancholy retrospect which crossed their thoughts in looking back to the days of gigantic strength in "life's morning march when the spirit was young." There was the same contrast between them as of yore, attributable to the different condition of their mental health. The indestructible buoyancy of my father's spirit gave to his mind an almost perennial freshness, and he was not less susceptible to emotions of joy and

sorrow, than in the passionate days of old. But now all within was tempered by the chastening hand of time, and the outward expression showed it. There was no more exuberant happiness, but a peaceful calm; no violent grief, but a deep solemnity. Mr. Lockhart, on the other hand, seemed to live with a broken heart, while all about him had a faded and dejected air. He spoke despondingly of himself. Health, happiness, and energy, he said, were gone; he was sick of London, its whirl and its excitements.

"I would fain return to Edinburgh," he said, "to be cheered by some of your young happy faces, but you would have to nurse me, and be kind to me, for I am a weary old man, fit for nothing but to shut myself up and be sulky." He certainly looked very much out of health and spirits at that time; indeed, he was like a man weighed down by inward sorrow. The momentary vivacity which lightened his countenance was almost more painful to witness than the melancholy natural to it. Now and then, some of the old sarcastic manner came across him, and as he sat at the writing-table, with the once tempting pen and ink before him, one could fancy him again dashing off one of those grotesque sketches in which he had delighted to commemorate friends and foes. But the stimulus was gone. A few hours were spent together by these old friends, during which there was much talk of bygone days. They parted as they met, with kindness and affection, expressing hopes that renewed health might enable them to meet again. My father stood at the door

while Lockhart got into his carriage, and watched him out of sight. He never saw him again.[1]

As long as my father's mind remained unclouded, he continued to take an interest in the welfare of his friends, participating with unaffected sincerity in their pleasures, and rejoicing in their affection. The following little note to Mr. Robert Findlay, says more than many words, and is significant of that *love* which was so large an element of his nature :[2]—

"My dearest Robert,—I rejoice in my soul to learn that your son Charles has married a wife to his own entire satisfaction, and I trust to his father's, mother's, sisters', and brother's, and all friends. Kindest love to Mrs. Findlay and the rest. God bless you, and her, and them. Much love in few words. — Your friend of friends, J. W."

And so with these kind words he took farewell of the friend, the "brother," of his youth. What thoughts of the past would revisit his memory in writing that little missive, we can imagine, taking him back to the sunlit hills which enclosed the home of his prime, from whence his "friend of friends," heard of a wedding morning, bright as the good deserve, and radiant with

[1] Mr. Lockhart died at Abbotsford, November 25, 1854, about seven months after the Professor.

[2] Since I wrote the above this dear friend has also been laid in his grave. Mr. Robert Findlay died on the 27th of June 1862, having reached the advanced age of seventy-eight. As one of my father's earliest and dearest friends, I would have respected his memory; but personal knowledge of his high worth, and all those amiable qualities which endeared him to his family and friends, claims expression of sorrow.

happiness; more serene, because it had come to close sorrow long and stoutly borne.

A yearning for home still lingered amidst the fading joys of memory; and the old man, standing on the threshold of another life, sighed to set his house in order. He must return to Edinburgh; so, bidding adieu to the kind brother who had so gently met all the caprices of his illness, and to whom the happier condition of a docile spirit had endeared him more than ever, he left the devoted circle of that household towards the close of the year 1852, and once again established himself in Gloucester Place.

For the first few months after his return, he appeared to rally, and gained strength; so much so as to inspire his family with hopes that better days were yet in store; but like the sudden reanimation of a dying light, the glow proved tremulous and uncertain. Anxiety and watching still continued; the gloom and depression of his mind coming and going from time to time, leaving, with the struggle of each beating wave, a melancholy evidence that a wreck lay there. How was such a trial borne? As all others had been. Grief deep as death was overcome in the end by patience. That great and lustrous mind felt day by day how its might was sinking; while no outward complaint came to tell of the agony within; but efforts more trying and perplexing than can be told were made to test the amount of power yet remaining. He would read, or rather cause to be read aloud, books upon the same subject, as differently treated by their various authors, chapter by chapter. Philosophical

works were tried first, but confusion was the result of this process of inquiry as to his mental strength. The attempt was too much. With a sigh of despondency the volumes were laid aside, ordered to be taken away, and were not again brought out. A short period of repose, that might in ordinary cases have been beneficial, seemed only to fret and disturb him. There was no allaying that long-fostered passion for communion with the immortals. Thus, for a period almost covering the year, were such afflicting struggles continued. Nothing was ever seen more touching than the gradual undoing of that lofty mind; the gradual wasting of that powerful strength. One looked on, and felt as David did of old when the Lord's anointed fell. "How are the mighty fallen!" were words that sent a sound as a solemn dirge to our hearts. Yet was there no rebellion in this desire to hold fast the gifts that were his from heaven: who would part willingly with such powers?[1]

[1] I remember having once heard an instance of his having effected a happy cure in a case of severe mental trouble. The subject was a student whom he had recognised as showing great promise in his earlier career, but whose subsequent exertions had not answered his expectations. Inquiring of the youth the cause of this falling off, he learned that his mind had been overpowered, as many are on entrance into thinking life, by doubts and difficulties leading to darkness and disbelief, verging in despair. Fitful glimpses of light had crossed his dreary path, but still he found no comfort or rest. The Professor listened to the tale of grief with tender sympathy. His steady faith and long experience, his knowledge of how doubts and fears assail the hearts even of the high and pure, enabled him to enter into the very depths of that woe-stricken soul. With words of wisdom he consoled the wandering spirit, while he led him by the power of persuasion, the force of truth, and the tenderness of love, to the clear upper light, there leaving him to the blessing of the Father. The clouds broke away, and the day-spring from on high revisited that darkened spirit.

Such usefulness was about to pass away:—he had parted from "his children." In the silence of his more composed hours, God be praised, the "storm was tempered," and a quiet sunshine shed its peaceful radiance over his spirit, nor have I reason to believe that other than happy thoughts visited him, mingled with the brightest and most joyous of the past—of those days when "our parish" was little less than Paradise in his eyes.

Certain it was the "Mearns" came among those waking dreams, and then he gathered around him when the spring mornings brought gay jets of sunshine into the little room where he lay, the relics of a youthful passion, one that with him never grew old. It was an affecting sight to see him busy, nay, quite absorbed, with the fishing-tackle scattered about his bed, propped up with pillows,—his noble head, yet glorious with its flowing locks, carefully combed by attentive hands, and falling on each side of his unfaded face. How neatly he picked out each elegantly dressed fly from its little bunch, drawing it out with trembling hand along the white coverlet, and then replacing it in his pocket-book, he would tell ever and anon of the streams he used to fish in of old, and of the deeds he had performed in his childhood and youth.[1] These precious relics of a bygone sport were wont to be brought out in the early spring, long before sickness

[1] A year or two earlier he writes to his youngest daughter:—"I took stock, and find I have forty-four dozen loch flies and fifty-six of stream flies. Of the latter six dozen are well adapted for our river; but 'Lord Salton' is nearly done, and must be renewed. Into the Yarrow I shall never again throw a fly."

confined him to his room. It had been a habit of many years, but then the "sporting jacket" was donned soon after, and angling was no more a mere delightful day-dream, but a reality, "that took him knee-deep, or waistband-high, through river-feeding torrents, to the glorious music of his running and ringing reel." This outward life was at an end. With something of a prophetic spirit did he write in former days when he affected the age he had not attained,—how love for all sports would live in his heart for ever: "Our spirit burns within us, but our limbs are palsied, and our feet must brush the heather no more. Lo! how beautifully these fast travelling pointers do their work on that black mountain's breast! intersecting it into parallelograms, and squares, and circles, and now all a stoop on a sudden, as if frozen to death! Higher up among the rocks, and cliffs, and stones, we see a stripling whose ambition it is to strike the sky with his forehead, and wet his hair in the misty cloud, pursuing the ptarmigan now in their variegated summer dress, seen even among the unmelted snows. Never shall Eld deaden our sympathies with the pastimes of our fellow-men any more than with their highest raptures, their profoundest griefs." Nor did he belie the words.

We were naturally desirous of keeping from his knowledge anything that would surprise him into agitation. This could not, however, always be done, for family distress, as a matter of course, he must participate in. The day which brought us intelligence of Mrs. Rutherfurd's death was one of startling sorrow to him. His own widowed life had been one of long

and faithful mourning; and the bereavement which his friend, Lord Rutherfurd, was called upon to endure, filled his mind with the most poignant pain, and it was with difficulty he could banish the subject from his thoughts. Other men's sorrows, in the unselfishness of his nature, he made his own. More unbounded sympathy I never knew. Therein lay the feminine delicacy of his nature, the power of winning all, soothing the sad, encouraging the weak, scorning not the humble. With heart and hand alike open, he knew and acted up to the meaning of one simple rule,—Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you. So, through another spring into summer, and once again to the mellowed autumn and winter snows, he lingered on contented, almost cheerful, but also sometimes very sad. At such times he never spoke. Can we doubt that these visitations of solemnity had a meaning? The veil which it had pleased God to draw over the greater power of his mind had not left it without a lesser light. He still knew and loved his friends, and found pleasure in their occasional visits. The presence of his children and his grandchildren continued to cheer and interest him almost to the end. That silence, so incomprehensible to common minds, looking too often for consolation in the recited words of Scripture, which they convey to curious ears as expressing the last interest and hope of dying hours, was no other than the composing of his spirit with the unseen God.

There is little more to tell. The last time my father was seen of familiar faces was on the 13th of October

1853. I drove with him to Mr. Alexander Hill's shop in Princes Street, in order to see a painting of Herrings' then being exhibited there. He did not take so lively an interest in the picture as I had anticipated, but soon grew wearied, and evidently unable to rouse himself from a certain air of indifference which, when disappointed, he generally wore. Yet he was not always untouched by the efforts which love made to cheer and please him; and his moistened eye told more than a thousand words how he felt and followed the little entertainments got up for this end. Young children were at all times attractive to him, and though now unable to do more than stroke their heads or touch their little hands, still he loved to look upon them; smiling a gentle adieu when their prattle became too much for him. One day I thought to amuse him in one of his gloomy moments by introducing his youngest grandchild, some four years of age, dressed as "Little Red Riding-hood." This picturesque small figure, in a scarlet cloak, with a shock of long curls hanging about his merry face, made his *entrée* into grandpapa's room, holding up in his chubby hands a basket neatly adorned with leaves, out of which peeped sticks of barley-sugar and other bon-bons. Trotting to the bedside where the old man lay, he offered his dainty repast with a sort of shy fear that the wolf was actually there, and was greatly relieved by the kind caresses and good welcome he received, observing that grandpapa's hands were so white, and that he never once *growled.*

The tender and anxious question which he asked concerning Robert Burns, "Did he read his Bible?"

may, perhaps, by some be asked about himself. On a little table, near his bedside, his Bible lay during his whole illness, and was read morning and evening regularly. His servant also read it frequently to him. In the strong days of his prime, he wrote, not without experience, these words in reference to sacred poetry :—

"He who is so familiar with his Bible, that each chapter, open it where he will, teems with household words, may draw thence the theme of many a pleasant and pathetic song. For is not all human nature and all human life shadowed forth in those pages? But the heart, to sing well from the Bible, must be imbued with religious feelings, as a flower is alternately with dew and sunshine. The study of *The Book* must have begun in the simplicity of childhood, when it was felt to be indeed divine, and carried on through all those silent intervals in which the soul of manhood is restored, during the din of life, to the purity and peace of its early being. The Bible to such must be a port, even as the sky—with its sun, moon, and stars—its boundless blue, with all its cloud mysteries—its peace deeper than the grave, because of realms beyond the grave—its tumult louder than that of life, because heard altogether in all the elements. He who begins the study of the Bible late in life must, indeed, devote himself to it night and day, and with a humble and a contrite heart, as well as an awakened and soaring spirit, ere he can hope to feel what he understands, or to understand what he feels; thoughts and feelings breathing in upon him, as if from a region hanging, in its mystery, between heaven and earth."

On Christmas day, 1853, he assembled around him his entire family, sons and daughters, with their children, to spend the day in his house. It was almost merry. His servant decorated the rooms with evergreens, and one little garland, with touching love, he ordered to be laid on his wife's picture, which hung over the chimney-piece in his bedroom. He was unable to dine down-stairs, but we visited him after dinner, and rejoiced in the cheerfulness that lighted up his countenance. It seemed a harbinger of coming peace, and we felt no strangeness in wishing him a happy Christmas, nor thought, as we gazed upon that beautiful face, that the snows of another such season would fall upon his grave. My brother John, with his wife and some of his infant family, spent this New Year with him. This was a great happiness; and for some time the old fervour and animation of his spirit seemed to return. They remained with him to the end. There were two subjects he had been wont to dwell on with affecting tenderness—the memory of his wife, and his beautiful home on Windermere. Had they faded from his vision now, or were they only more sacred as sights now connected with the glories of another world, purified in his thoughts from all earthly contact, renewed in spirit and in beauty, just as his sight was about to close, and his heart to cease from participation in things here below? I cannot say, but the name of "Jane" and of "Elleray" never more escaped his lips.

Another spring is announced amid sunshine, and the cheerful twittering of birds. Even in towns the beauti-

ful influence of this season is felt, for the very air has caught up the fresh loamy perfume from the far-off fields, and a feeling of exhilaration is participated in by all creatures. The languid invalid is not indifferent to this emotion, and, with reanimated nature, new life invigorates every sentient being. And so did we hope that this advent of spring would cheer, and for a time console the heart of him whose eyes, yet able to bear the light of day, were often turned from the bed where he lay to the window, as if he wandered again in the faintness of memory to the freedom of outward nature. But these impulses were gone, and the activity which once bore him gladly along to the merry music of streams "to linger by the silent shores of lochs," rested now for ever. On the 1st of April, I received a message that my father had become worse. I hurried immediately to Gloucester Place. On entering the room a sad sight caught my eye. He had risen to breakfast much in his usual state of health, but, while taking it, a stroke of paralysis seized him. When I arrived, his bed was being prepared for him, and he still lay in his large chair. A mortal change was visible over his whole frame. The shock affected one entire side, from his face downwards, and at that moment he appeared quite unconscious. We laid him gently in bed, composing that still powerful-looking body as comfortably as possible, and in a few moments the medical attendants arrived. There was no hope given us; his hour had come. All that were near and dear to him were in the house. Not a sound was heard but the heavy and oppressed breathing of the dying man. No change

took place the whole of that day. His brother Robert never left his bed-side, but sat there holding the big hand, now able only to return the pressure given it; the last grateful sign of still conscious love.

We all watched through the night while some hours of natural sleep fell upon him. Next day the same sad scene; no change; morning's dawn brought no comfort. It was now Sunday; time hurried on, and we still hoped he knew us as we laid our hands upon his, but he was unable to speak. The only sign we had that consciousness had not left him was, that he continued to summon his servant, according to his old habit, by knocking upon the small table at his bed-side. Several times during the day he made that signal, and on its being answered, I could not say that it meant more than that he desired his servant should now and then be in the room. She had served him long, faithfully, and with a true woman's kindness. It was the only way in which he could thank her. At five o'clock his breathing became more difficult. Evening sent its deepening shadows across his couch—darker ones were soon to follow. Still that sad and heavy breathing as if life were unwilling to quit the strong heart. Towards midnight he passed his hand frequently across his eyes and head, as if to remove something obstructing his vision. A bitter expression for one instant crossed his face,—the veil was being drawn down. A moment more, and as the clock chimed the hour of twelve, that heaving heart was still.

The following lines came into my hands after my father's death. They were written in youth; but the fact that his prayer was granted, makes these beautiful words, as it were, the parting farewell which his lips were not permitted to utter to those he loved:—

"When nature feels the solemn hour is come
That parts the spirit from her mortal clay,
May that hour find me in my weeping home,
'Mid the blest stillness of a Sabbath-day!
May none I deeply love be then away;
For through my heart the husht though sobbing breath
Of natural grief a holy calm will send;
With sighs from earth will heavenly voices blend,
Till, as on seraph fair, I smile on death,
Who comes in peace, like an expected friend.
Dipt in celestial hues the wings of love
Will o'er my soul a gracious shade extend;
While, as if air were sun, gleams from above
The day with God, the Sabbath without end!"

RESURGAM.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

I.

PUBLIC FUNERAL AND PROPOSED STATUE.

I AM indebted for the following account to a friend:—

"On the 7th of April 1854 the mortal remains of Professor Wilson were laid in the Dean Cemetery. Seldom has such a procession wended through the streets of Edinburgh as passed, in the soft sunshine of that April afternoon, from Gloucester Place, up Doune Terrace, Moray Place, and Randolph Crescent, on to that lovely sequestered ground, where now repose a goodly company of men whose names will not soon die,—Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherfurd, Thomas Thomson, Edward Forbes, David Scott, John Wilson, and his well-loved brother James. Students were there from many a distant place, who had come to pay the last tribute to "the Professor," whom they loved, and for old Scotland's sake were so proud of. Tears were shed by manly eyes; and none were there who did not feel that the earth closed that day over such a man as the world will not soon see again.

"That Edinburgh, rich in monuments for a northern city, should unhesitatingly determine to add to these a statue of John Wilson, was most fitting and natural. The resolution was not only at once formed, but speedily acted upon. Shortly after his death, a public meeting was held, the Lord Provost (M'Laren) presiding, at which it was formally resolved that such a statue should be erected 'on a suitable and conspicuous site.' A committee was appointed with that view, consisting of the Right Hon. the Lord Justice-General (M'Neill), Lord Neaves, Sir John Watson Gordon, P.R.S.A., R.A., Mr. John Blackwood, Mr. Robert Chambers, Mr. P. S. Fraser, and Dr. John Burt. Much time was necessarily occupied in the receipt of subscriptions, and other arrangements; but early in 1857 the committee found themselves in a position to commission Mr. John Steell, R.S.A., Her Majesty's Sculptor for Scotland, to execute a bronze statue, ten feet in height, with a suitable pedestal, to be placed at the north-west corner of East Princes Street Gardens. The statue is now approaching completion; and will be erected on the appointed site a few months hence. As the work has not yet, however, left the artist's studio—has not, indeed, received the final touches from his hands—it would be presumptuous to speak of it further than to say that it promises to prove worthy alike of the sculptor, of his noble subject, and of the very 'suitable and conspicuous site' it is destined to occupy. In a representation of a man whose notable person is so fresh in the recollection of many hundreds of his fellow-citizens, exact portraiture was indispensable; and it was well that the sculptor, in presenting

to us that memorable figure in his habit as he lived, was able also, even by faithful adherence to that habit, to attain much of the heroic element. The careless ease of Professor Wilson's ordinary dress is adopted, with scarcely a touch of artistic license, in the statue; a plaid, which he was in frequent habit of wearing, supplies the needed folds of drapery, and the trunk of a palm-tree gives a rest to the figure, while it indicates, commemoratively, his principal poetical work. The lion-like head and face, full of mental and muscular power, thrown slightly upward and backward, express fervid and impulsive genius evolving itself in free and fruitful thought,—the glow of poetical inspiration animating every feature. The figure, tall, massive, athletic; the hands—the right grasping a pen, at the same time clutching the plaid that hangs across the chest, the left resting negligently in the leaves of a half-open manuscript; the limbs, loosely planted, yet firm and vigorous;—all correspond with the grandly elevated expression of the countenance. To his contemporaries the statue will vividly recall Professor Wilson, at once in his everyday aspect, and as he was wont to appear in his class-room or on the platform, in the very fervour of his often fiery oratory; while to succeeding times it will preserve a vivid and worthy representation of one who, apart from all his other claims to such commemoration, was universally recognised as one of the most striking, poetic, and noble-looking men of his illustrious time.

II.

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO JANUS.

Mr. Lockhart to Mr. Boyd.

"Chiefswood, *4th September.*

"Dear Sir,—I am much surprised at the Professor's silence. However, time must not be lost needlessly, so I send you to be put up in slips, 1st, 'Thoughts on Bores,' which paper is by Miss Edgeworth, who, I *believe*, will allow that to be said when you publish your volume.

"2d, Hints on the Universities; 3d, Rabbinical Apologue; 4th, Maxims from Goethe; 5th, Ordeal by Fire; 6th, Five Sonnets from the German.

"I have chosen these as they would illustrate the different methods of printing to be employed in the book. You will consult only your own convenience as to your choice of that, or those to be put in slips at present.—Yours truly, J. G. L."

Wilson to the same.

"*Wednesday, Two o'clock.*

"Dear Sir,—I send the revised sheets corrected for press. I have seen Mr. Lockhart, and find you have an Arabian tale of his in hand, which put in anywhere you choose, either after or before the order I gave you in my last note. The 'Bohemian Gardener' is not finished, I understand, so it can go in afterwards. Do not set into form the Sceptical Estimate of the Fine Arts. Mr. Lockhart leaves town to-morrow, and I believe he intends to *alter* a little the poem on Lord Byron. Brown on Beauty may be put into forms; a few corrections will be made on it. Make a new paragraph near the beginning, 'When we speak of the emotion,' etc.—Yours truly, J. Wilson."

[1] "Janus, or the Edinburgh Literary Almanac." Oliver & Boyd, 1826. Fcap. 8vo.

WILSON TO MR. BOYD.

"ELLERAY, KENDAL,
"*Thursday, 6th October* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—Along with this you will receive three papers, two of them complete and one not so. The incomplete one is 'Poetry and Prose,' of which I will send the conclusion in a few days along with a quantity of matter.

"Whatever arrangement Mr. Lockhart may have made about the upmaking of the articles, you will follow it. If he has made no arrangement final and decisive, then I think his own 'Hints' would open the volume as well or better than anything else, being excellent in itself, and on a subject of great interest; then might follow the other articles sent by him indifferently or in any order. After these may come my two papers entitled 'Rise and Decline of Nations,' and on the 'Prime Objects of Government,' which set up into forms, and send to me without delay per mail, letting me know *by letter* the day they leave Edinburgh.

"They shall be returned instantly, corrected for press. Send also the incomplete Essay on Poetry and Prose along with them. I shall leave Elleray on the 27th, and be in Edinburgh on the 29th; but you had better send me the articles without delay, as you will be receiving copy from me before I come down, and instantly after. I shall send four short tales in the manner of 'Lights and Shadows,' which you will make up as they arrive, either after my other articles or on any other plan, for the order signifies nothing. Owing to the length of several of the articles, the volume should be 530 pages, that shorter and lighter articles may have room. The volume will conclude with a poem of mine in four parts, of a romantic character, of which I will send you the first part along with my next packet.

"I have written to Mr. Lockhart by this day's post, informing him of the contents of this letter.—Yours very truly,

"JOHN WILSON."

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"ELLERAY, *16th October* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I sent per coach three articles for *Janus*, and I have got so many more finished, or in hand, that I wish to see Mr. Lockhart before I send them to you.

"I am not without hopes of seeing him here in a few days; but, at all events, shall know what articles he has done in addition to those he sent you. From the list of articles he sent me a few days

ago, which he is doing or to do, and from those I have in hand, the volume cannot easily be less than 550 pages, which, since there is to be no embellishments, may probably be got up so as to sell at the price you would like to fix. I shall be in Edinburgh on the 29th, and the printing may then go on as rapidly as you choose, as I shall have more copy than can be used for this volume.

"You will oblige me greatly by sending me a bill for £150, which I could discount at Kendal at Messrs. Wakefield. This would be a great convenience for me, just at present on the eve of my leaving the neighbourhood. This request is rather before date, but I will send my receipt for the money, and in final settlement consider the former.

"As I leave this on Thursday the 27th, I hope to hear from you a few days before in answer to this.—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly, JOHN WILSON."

MR. LOCKHART TO MR. BOYD.

"CHIEFSWOOD, *Saturday Evening.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was just about to lose all patience, or to take it for granted the Professor was defunct, when I received this evening a letter from him, in which he announces his having sent to you *three* articles, and his intention to send more in a few days. He also says he has told you to begin the volume with my 'Hints on Universities.' Since he thinks so, so be it. After the 'Hints,' please set up in the following order:—

"Article 2. Ordeal by Fire; 3. Specimens of the Rabbin Apologue; 4. Sonnets from the German; 5. Thoughts on Bores; 6. Maxims, after which (as mentioned on the slip) the little article 'Leaves,' now sent; 7. Then set up *one* of the Professor's articles, a longish one, whichever of the three you like; 8. Then the Friesland Proverbs, now sent; 9. Moustache, now sent; 10. The Player and his Poodle, now sent; 11. The Return, from Goethe, now sent; 12. Jews of Worms, now sent; 13. Another of Mr. Wilson's articles, now sent; 14. To Death, from the German, now sent; 15. Glasgow Revisited, now sent; 16. Maclean of Aros, now sent; 17. Serenade, from Goethe, now sent; 18. Another of the Professor's articles, now sent; 19. Song of the Gipsy King, now sent; 20. Inscription at Hoch-heim, now sent; 21. Epitaph of De Ranzau, now sent; 22. Epigrams, now sent; 23. Essence of the Opera, now sent; 24. Ballad from the Norman-French.

"In regard to all these, you need not bother yourself with slips,

but set up in sheets. That sent as specimen is most beautiful, and I never saw proofs that needed so little correction. I am called from home for some days, but if I be not back very soon I shall let you know where to address (when I am concerned with the correcting of them). In the meantime, don't send any to this place until you hear from me. I have corrected the proofs formerly sent, so that you may at once go on as merrily as you choose.

"Of course you will send the Professor proofs of everything.—Yours truly, J. G. LOCKHART.

"From Mr. Wilson, 17th October 1825:—

"Antipathies; Dante and Milton; on the character Buonapartic."

WILSON TO THE SAME.

"ELLERAY, *Saturday, October* 22, 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your kind letter, and enclosure of £150 on account of *Janus*.

"In sheet 6, I agree with the compositor that the white lines should be taken out. Fill up the space with the 'Player and Poodle,' and 'The Return.' After the article on the Rise and Fall of Nations, 'German Sonnets,' and a pretty poem in print, now sent; then on the 'Prime Objects of Government;'. then Milton and Dante, Buonaparte, and Antipathies, and any other short articles. These last three I have not yet received, but put them into forms, for very few corrections will be made on them. Then prose and poetry, which I now return corrected, and without any addition, as the intended conclusion forms another article, which I now send incomplete, entitled 'Sceptical Estimate of the Fine Arts,' which put into slips. 'Brown on Beauty,' now sent, you will put up into forms after the other mentioned. That will bring the forms to about 240 pages, I suspect. I will send more MS. without much delay. The order I have sent of the short articles is of no consequence, if you have set up in forms in any other order; but keep it if you have not. The next 60 pages will be pathetic and picturesque tales. After that, 50 pages of lively articles, all written by me. Mr. Lockhart will then contribute a hundred pages of excellent articles, and the remainder also I expect will be good. The volume should not be less than 550 pages, which I hope you can afford at 12 shillings. I delayed writing for two posts, in hopes of getting the three articles, but they have not come to hand. I will be in Edinburgh on the 29th in my house in Gloucester Place,

so send nothing here after receipt of this.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly, JOHN WILSON."

WILSON TO MR. BOYD.

"GLOUCESTER PLACE, *2d November* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—I got home this evening, after a melancholy delay of some days at Hawick, owing to the sudden and alarming illness of Mrs. Wilson. Thank God she is wonderfully recovered, and restored to a state free from all danger.

"I shall correct all revises to-morrow, and send them to you before dinner.

"I send you some more MS., namely, 'Pins,' 'Antiquity,' 'Love Poetry,' 'Preface to any New Work of Imagination.' These may go into forms forthwith after 'Beauty.' 'Medals,' and the two poems in the same hand, from some quarter unknown to me, you had better put up after the articles before mentioned, and in forms at once. They are good articles, and such a correspondent deserves encouragement. The other articles are not good, but I know the quarter from which one of them comes, and will write to the author, who is a man of genius. By the time the MS. now sent is in types, I shall send you more; and I have reason to think what will add greatly to the value of *Janus*. Remember not to scrimp it, and I presume it will be in time if shipped by the end of the month. I shall see Mr. Lockhart to-morrow at one o'clock.

"*Wednesday Morning.*—I wrote this last night.—Yours truly, "J. WILSON."

TO THE SAME.

"*15th November* 1826.

"DEAR SIR,—I have hardly had a moment to myself since I saw you, but hope in two days or so to have a little leisure. I have corrected or looked at the two poems. You will correct Δ's sheets by his MS. No word yet from the Opium-Eater.

"I hope to send some MS. in a couple of days, as not much time now remains.—Yours truly, JOHN WILSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,—Set up as much of the enclosed as will finish the half sheet in question. Send the half sheet itself to-morrow to the

class-room at one o'clock for correction, and along with it all the enclosed MS., for I want it to go on with.—Yours truly,

"J. WILSON.

"*Thursday, 17th November* 1855.—*P.S.*—I will send back the other things to-morrow, for I cannot lay my hands on them just now."

TO THE SAME.

"*21st November* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—I send the conclusion of the tale (Miles Atherton). After it, set up 'Haco's Grave,' 'The Home Star,' 'To the Spirit of Health,' 'Genius.' After these a paper now sent about Cambridge. The paper on 'Crusades' I wish put into slips. The other may go into forms at once.—Yours truly, J. WILSON."

TO THE SAME.

"6, GLOUCESTER PLACE,
26th November 1825.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have been hindered by many causes, among the worst my wife's indisposition, from doing what I intended. I am in daily expectation of hearing from Mr. Lockhart of the Opium-Eater. I can have now no hope. I shall do four *Lights and Shadows*, and Mr. Lockhart will be sending in something good to conclude. Send down to-morrow night, and you will get whatever is ready.—Yours truly, JOHN WILSON."

TO THE SAME.

"*28th November* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—Enclosed is the corrected sheet, also three articles. The first, entitled 'Action and Thought,' will follow what is already in hand.

"Neither of the other two articles, 'Country Life' and 'Something Scottish" is finished, but set them up, and the conclusion will be sent to you in the afternoon.—Yours truly, J. W."

TO THE SAME.

"*28th November* 1825.

"DEAR SIR,—I send corrected slips. After it set up the article on the 'Study of History,' on which I took much pains for another work that will not be gone on with. After it the other article now sent.

"Then will come four stories, making about twenty-six pages;

and Mr. Lockhart, I hope, will send what will conclude the *tottle* (with 550) of the whole. I have been cruelly interrupted in all my work by Mrs. Wilson's indisposition. But she is pretty well to-day.—Yours truly, J. W."

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III.

LIST OF PROFESSOR WILSON'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE FROM 1826.[1]

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October.	Noctes, $16\frac{1}{2}$—Hogg, $1\frac{3}{4}$—Mr. C. Croker, $1\frac{3}{4}$,	$16\frac{1}{2}$

[1] I had hoped at one time to be able to give a complete list of my father's contributions from the commencement of the *Magazine*, but the materials for fixing the authorship with certainty in every instance do not exist.

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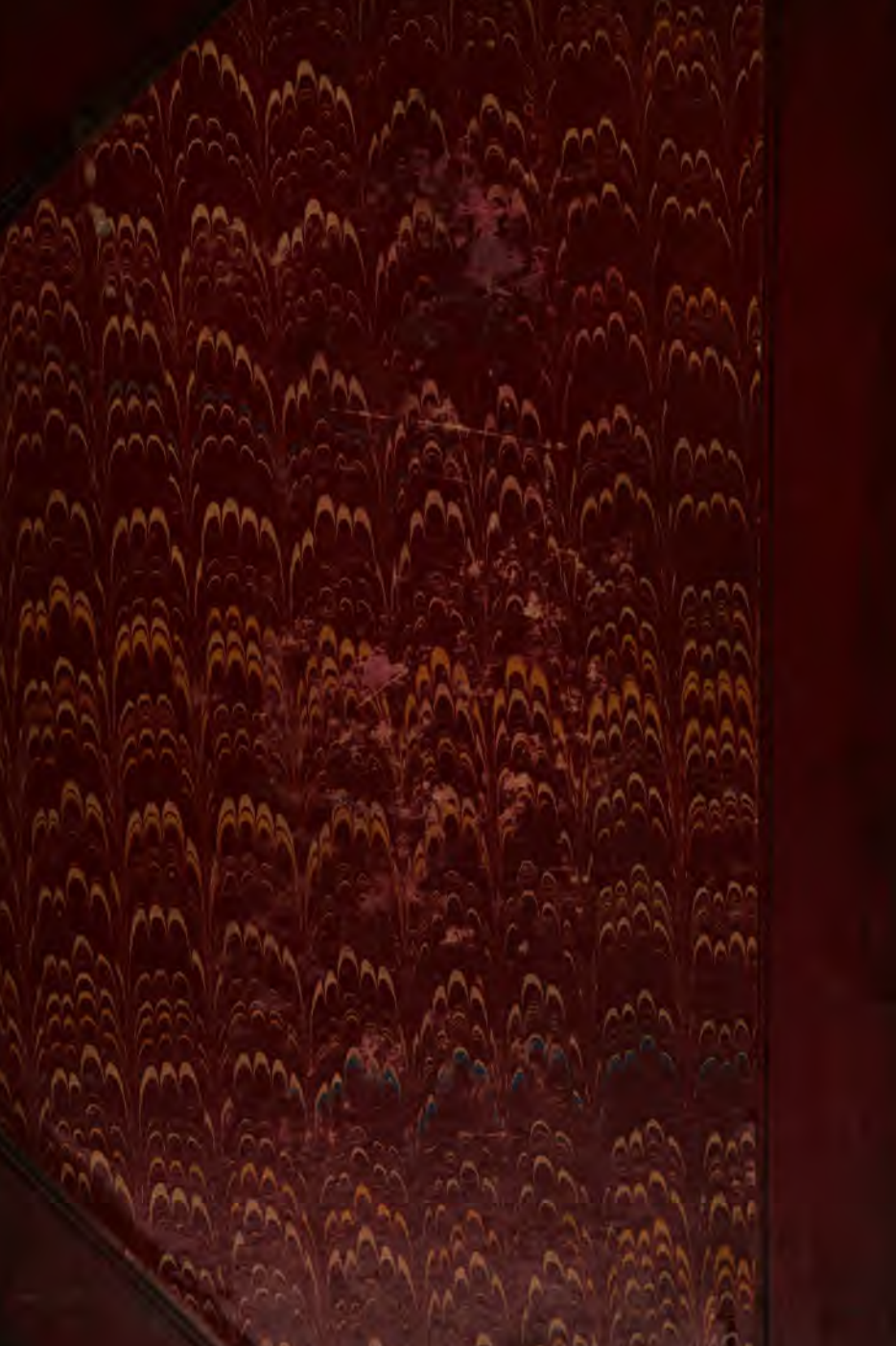
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